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EDITOR'S NOTE BY GEORGE!



Nat Geo Highlights

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FAMILY JOURNEYS

A new line of trips features 12 itineraries for travelers of all ages to discover destinations such as Peru and southern Africa in engaging, interactive ways. The trips are on offer now; departures begin in 2020. See page 45 and natgeojourneys.com/family.

YELLOWSTONE LIVE

This television event tracks videographers in real time as they explore an American wilderness. The second season airs June 23-26 on Nat Geo WILD and National Geographic Channel.

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When you read, watch, shop, or travel with us, you help advance the work of our scientists, explorers, and educators around the world. To learn more, visit natgeo.com/info.

EXPLORER ACADEMY

In this children's fiction series inspired by National Geographic explorers, 12-year-old Cruz Coronado embarks on global adventures. To buy the books: shopng.com/books; for games, videos, and more: exploreracademy.com.



Aoraki/Mount Cook towers above Lake Pukaki on New Zealand's South Island.

Summer is a season for losing yourself—for unleashing wanderlust, embracing curiosity, and exploring new places. Summer is also a season for finding yourself—perhaps precisely because you unleashed wanderlust, embraced curiosity, and explored new places. This interplay of opposites—foreign and familiar, old and new, lost and restored—is what makes travel such a rewarding pursuit. In this issue we are proud to share “The Beautiful Road,” a story about an epic drive in New Zealand, a place we love that is recovering from an act of hate. Our tale is about a spirit of hospitality that will not be diminished. “Prairie Home” honors the Native American and conservation communities that have rehabilitated and protected Oklahoma’s Tallgrass Prairie Preserve for generations to come. Our Best List, a data-backed index of the most welcoming neighborhoods in the United States, celebrates revitalized cities that benefit both locals and visitors. At National Geographic, we believe that each traveler is a curious explorer who seeks to engage with the world and build an ethic around conserving what is unique and sustaining what is irreplaceable. Here’s to a summer of exploration, enlightenment, and bold experiences. Thank you for reading. —George W. Stone, Editor in Chief

JOURNEY OR DESTINATION

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In Oklahoma, a rare remnant of original grassland sustains both conservation and communities. **p. 88**

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Take a daily tour around the world through our social media platforms.



The 100-year-old Grand Canyon National Park makes our list of best summer trips (p. 48).

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FOR
THOSE
WHO NEED
WATER
TO BREATHE



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COSTA

SEE WHAT'S OUT THERE

YES, WE'RE OBSESSED WITH SUMMER GETAWAYS!

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

TRAVEL WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE

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RESEARCH EDITOR Starlight Williams
SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCERS Kelly Barrett, Nathan Strauss
VIDEO PRODUCER/EDITOR Rebekah Barlas
COPYDESK Amy Kolczak; Caroline Braun, Cindy Leitner, Mary Beth Oelkers-Keegan
CONTRIBUTING RESEARCHERS Dale Brauner, Cait Etherton, Autumn Giusti, Kevin Johnson, Melissa Malamut, Meg Miner Murray, Meg Roosevelt, Meg Weaver
CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITORS Shweta Gulati, Julie Hau, Brendan McCabe

EDITORIAL PROJECTS DIRECTOR Andrew Nelson
EDITORS AT LARGE AND TRAVEL ADVISORY BOARD Costas Christ, Annie Fitzsimmons, Don George, Andrew McCarthy, Norie Quintos, Robert Reid
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Karen Carmichael, Heather Greenwood Davis, Maryellen Kennedy Duckett, P. F. Kluge, Margaret Loftus, Carrie Miller, Eric Rosen, Jayne Wise

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Michael George, Aaron Huey, Erika Larsen, Jim Richardson, Krista Rossow

PRODUCTION & MANUFACTURING
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Kristin Semeniuk
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION MANAGER Julie A. Ibinson
IMAGING TECHNICIANS Clay Burneston, John Chow, Andrew Jaecks
MARKET RESEARCH MANAGER Tracy Hamilton Stone

COMMUNICATIONS
VICE PRESIDENT Heather Wyatt
Heather.Wyatt@natgeo.com; 212-822-7093
DIRECTOR Meg Calnan
Meg.Calnan@natgeo.com; 202-912-6703

ADVERTISING NORTH AMERICA SALES OFFICES
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL MEDIA John Campbell
1211 Sixth Ave., 42nd Fl., New York, NY 10036;
212-822-7432 **EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,**
CLIENT SOLUTIONS Claudia Malley

NATIONAL BRAND MANAGERS
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS (NY) Hilary Halstead
Hilary.Halstead@natgeo.com; Danny Bellish Danny.Bellish@natgeo.com **ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES (NY)** Molly Ryan *Molly.Ryan@natgeo.com*, Alex Sobrino *Alex.Sobrino@natgeo.com* **DIRECTOR, CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS (BOSTON)** Erik Nelson *Erik.Nelson@natgeo.com* **SOUTHEAST & CARIBBEAN BRAND MANAGER** Maria Coyne *mecoyne@mecoyneinc.com* **MIDWEST BRAND MANAGER** Bill Graff *Bill.Graff@natgeo.com* **DETROIT BRAND MANAGER** Karen Sarris *Karen.Sarris@natgeo.com* **ROCKY MOUNTAIN STATES** Scribner Media Services, Tanya Scribner *tanya@scribmedia.com* **WEST COAST BRAND MANAGER** Eric Josten *Eric.Josten@natgeo.com* **DIRECTOR, CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS (LA)** Casey Priore *Casey.Priore@natgeo.com* **MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA** Adelina Carpenter *acarpent@prodigy.net.mx*

SENIOR DIRECTOR, CLIENT SOLUTIONS Alex King
ADVERTISING RESEARCH DIRECTOR Carrie Campbell
CONTRACTS MANAGER JoAnne Schultz

MAGAZINE PUBLISHING ADMINISTRATION
1145 17th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036-4688

VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER John MacKethan
CIRCULATION PLANNING DIRECTOR Mark Viola
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL MEDIA AND EXPERIENCES Yulia P. Boyle
SENIOR MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING Rossana Stella
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Allison Bradshaw, Jocelyn Buckner, Brad Engborg, Cole Ingraham, Jennifer Liu, Nikisha Long, Emma Safford, Jeannette Swain, Joey Wolfkill

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"Growing up on Cape Cod, I thought every summer was a vacation. For wildlife sightings, though, I would choose Nags Head, North Carolina, where I once saw sea turtles hatching!"
—K.B.

"For the last 25 years, I've been spending a few weeks every summer climbing Wyoming's Ten Sleep Canyon. There's free camping in meadows of lupine and on July 4 a rodeo and street dance in the small town."
—A.H.

"I love Truckee, California, near Lake Tahoe. It has a quaint downtown, cozy inns, great history (the Donner Party broke down there), and the scent of Sierra Nevada pines."
—J.S.

"My summers belong to northern Michigan: browsing books at Between the Covers in Harbor Springs, lounging on the beaches of Sturgeon Bay, visiting Headlands International Dark Sky Park for views of the starry nights. Bliss."
—K.S.

"It doesn't get much better than backpacking with friends in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park—swimming holes, campfires, and early morning coffee with good company."
—C.I.

Where's your go-to spot in the summer? Tweet us at @NatGeo Travel

Starts off as a trail through monuments
of different faiths and philosophies.
Ends up becoming the journey within.

Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh,
3rd Century BC

Brihadeeswarar Temple,
Tamil Nadu, 11th Century AD

FURTHER

VOLCANOES ● VANCOUVER ● FRIENDLIEST U.S. NEIGHBORHOODS ● SLOVENIA ● WILDLIFE TOURISM ● SWEDEN





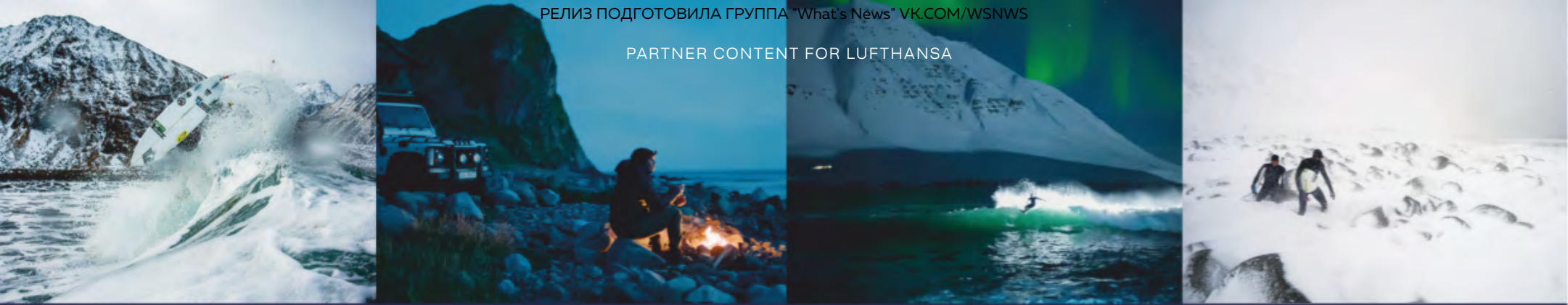
Double Take

The more you look, the more you see. And what at first seems familiar soon morphs into the surreal. For the captivating images of his *Cityscape* series, Nicolas Ruel takes inspiration from the world's busiest places, where people and action converge within a framework of iconic architecture.

The Montreal-born photographer has captured more than 60 cities with his double-exposure technique that involves pointing the camera in one direction for four seconds and then another for four more seconds, while the shutter remains open.

In this layered vision of Palace Square in **St. Petersburg, Russia**, Ruel shows modern-day denizens alongside grand relics of the imperial past, such as the General Staff Building with its triumphal arch and the Alexander Column honoring an emperor. (The Winter Palace dazzles just out of view.) From mid-June to early July, the city becomes especially lively as it revels in the White Nights, when the sun casts a 24-hour glow—a sight that is in itself surreal.

—Brooke Sabin



Life Changing Places: **Lofoten**

Untouched. Untamed. Yet bursting with endless opportunity. The Norwegian Lofoten, far above the Arctic Circle, is everything an adventurer could wish for and more. So when the opportunity came to explore the majestic cliffs and wild waters of the North Sea, National Geographic photographer Chris Burkard was ready.

As a photographer, Chris is no stranger to capturing the world's sunniest beaches. What's better than surfers, sand, and sun? But it turns out that even the most beautiful places will eventually become monotonous. What was lacking from his day job was a sense of wonder, a sense of real adventure.

Looking for a new location, Chris decided it was time for a drastic change. He was going to photograph one of the coldest beaches on Earth.

"I went to the Lofoten Islands. The islands of the gods. It was like I found this whole new world that maybe others had simply overlooked. It was minus 23 degrees, icy wind, and three-meter-high waves."

Plunging into freezing temperatures, the experience on the wild coast of Norway awakened a new passion in him. He was on a mission to dive right in (quite literally) to capture this incredible place like never before.

"If shivering is a form of meditation, then I consider myself a monk."

For Chris, capturing the Norwegian Lofoten was the life-changing experience he was looking for. Gone were the days of capturing the same old beaches. It was time to push the boundaries of travel and never look back.

"I traded touristy beaches for harsh wilderness. This was the best decision of my life."

To discover more **#LifeChangingPlaces** like Lofoten and to get inspiration for your next trip, visit **[Lufthansa.com/places](https://lufthansa.com/places)**



Lufthansa

**"I came here to do something different. And now I know,
I never want to do anything else again."**

—Chris Burkard





**Some places make you
feel alive like never before.
#LifeChangingPlaces**

Say yes to the world

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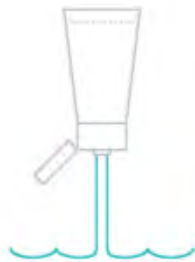
TRAVEL BETTER REEF RELIEF

The world's coral reefs are suffering, and chemicals commonly found in sunscreen contribute to the problem. But there are some bright ideas afoot. Some destinations, such as Hawaii and Palau, have introduced bans on harmful sunscreens; these bans will go into effect in the coming years. Here we offer facts and strategies to help you protect both your skin and the coral reefs.

2

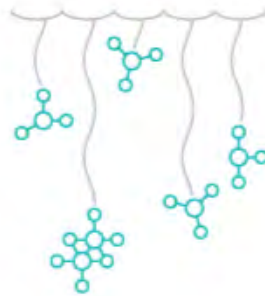
MILLION

species are estimated to live on or around the world's coral reefs.



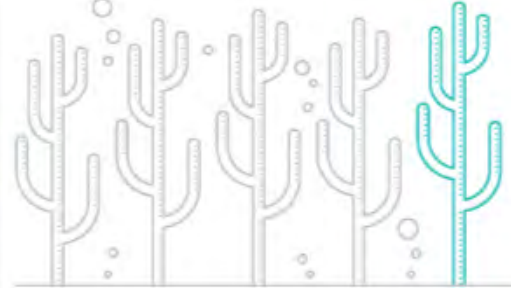
14,000 TONS

of sunscreen are thought to wash into the oceans each year.



82,000 CHEMICALS

from personal-care products may be tainting the seas.



ABOUT 80 PERCENT

of corals in the Caribbean have been lost in the last 50 years due to pollution, coastal development, and warming waters.



TAKE COVER

Pick shady spots for games and bring an umbrella, or better yet, a beach tent—some come with cool perks like a mini pool.

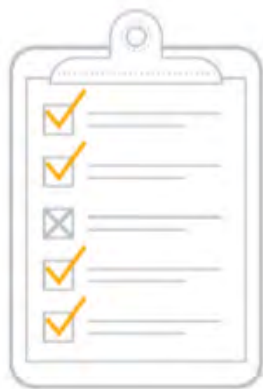


PUT THE SPF IN YOUR OUTFIT

Wearing hats, shirts, and other apparel incorporating UV protection can reduce the amount of sunscreen you need by up to 90 percent; these items will likely last longer than a bottle of sunscreen.

CHECK THE LIST

The Environmental Working Group rates products with SPF values—including some 650 sunscreens and 250 moisturizers—on their environmental impact (ewg.org/sunscreen).



SKIP THE SPRAY

Aerosols cause much of our sunscreen to miss its mark and fall to the sand, where it can easily wash into the ocean.



SEE WHAT'S INSIDE

"We recommend the use of reef-safe sunscreen free of oxybenzone," says Peter Gash, managing director of Lady Elliot Island, near Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Nanoparticles like oxybenzone are small enough to be absorbed by coral and disrupt growth cycles. Choose mineral-based sunblocks with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. If you're not sure whether a sunscreen has nanoparticles, consult the Consumer Products Inventory (nanotechproject.org/cpi).

RESEARCH THE RESORT

Some hotels are now helping guests be more responsible. For example, Aqua-Aston properties throughout Hawaii offer free, reef-friendly Raw Elements sunscreen in "eco kits" and via dispensers in the hotels' public areas.





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EXPLORER'S GUIDE

VOLCANOES



A helicopter soars above Piton de la Fournaise volcano on Réunion island.



Hot Spots

"To me, volcanoes are the most tangible phenomena showing that our planet is alive," says volcanologist Arianna Soldati, a National Geographic explorer. Worldwide, there are about 1,500 active volcanoes, some of which are sacred to local populations. Before you visit one, be sure to learn about beliefs surrounding the peak, and get an update on the volcanic activity. Once you're there, allow plenty of time for wonder. Here are three of Soldati's picks for Earth's most-fiery destinations.

—Katie Knorovsky

1

Stromboli, Italy

This island north of Sicily is known as the "lighthouse of the Mediterranean" due to its frequent volcanic activity—and the way its incandescent explosions illuminate

2

Erta Ale, Ethiopia

In the scorched Afar desert of Ethiopia, Erta Ale is the site of what Soldati calls the "only somewhat accessible lava lake." The southernmost pit of this constantly active, low-profile structure—an example of a shield volcano—has been dubbed the "gateway to hell." Intrepid travelers can hire an adventure guide who'll lead them to hot glimpses of the smoldering scene.

3

Réunion, France

Located in the Indian Ocean some 420 miles east of Madagascar, this French island features a stunning range of volcanic landscapes, Soldati says. Visitors can explore the cinder cones, caldera, and lava flows on foot and by car or helicopter. Every nine months, on average, Réunion's shield volcano, Piton de la Fournaise, puts on an amazing show of pyrotechnics.

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CITY GUIDE

VANCOUVER



► **Why Go Now:** Outdoor adventures, visionary art, and First Nations-inspired fare are on the itinerary



"Vancouver is a wonder city," Canadian author Stephen Leacock once wrote. "It has the combined excellence of nature's gift and man's handiwork." Today this statement rings truer than ever. The glittering glass metropolis—set against temperate rainforest, ocean inlets, and the Coast Mountains of British Columbia—keeps finding new ways to shine.

Over the past five years, the city has taken important steps toward reconciliation with the native Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh people, and a thriving indigenous tourism industry has grown along with it. More restaurants and bars are sourcing local ingredients—from foraged berries to Douglas fir infusions—and a booming brewery and distillery scene rivals that of Portland.

An ethic of sustainability permeates the culture of Vancouver, which brims with community gardens and farmers markets, plus LEED-certified buildings and more than 275 miles of bike paths. You can now pedal from the cedars of Stanley Park to the nudists of Wreck Beach. From there, mountains, islands, and wonder await.

—Serena Renner

In Vancouver's Coal Harbour, kayakers skim alongside city skyscrapers.

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KNOW IT VANCOUVER



Chinatown's Rennie Museum offers visitors an artful eyeeful.

Room Check

- TRENDY
- NEW
- CLASSIC

THE DOUGLAS

A star of the new Parq Vancouver casino complex, The Douglas mixes playful sophistication with Pacific Northwest earthiness. An illuminated, glass-enclosed Douglas fir tree presides over the check-in counter, and wood features in the decor throughout, along with mid-century furnishings and views of Vancouver. On the sixth-floor rooftop, The Victor restaurant sends out classic steaks plus regional seafood such as Dungeness crab and British Columbia king salmon.

EXCHANGE HOTEL

Unveiled in 2018, the EXchange Hotel occupies 11 floors of the 1929 Stock Exchange Building. During its LEED Platinum conversion, the first in Canada, the Edwardian facade was integrated into a modern tower. A Mediterranean restaurant, bar, and café—named after the Greek island Hydra—opened this spring.

ROSEWOOD HOTEL GEORGIA

The marble fireplace and grand staircase in the 1927 lobby hark back to the days when Nat King Cole stayed here. In 2011 the hotel debuted the indulgent Sense spa and sleek new rooms with soaking tubs. In the basement speakeasy, Prohibition, find a throwback haunt for live music, creative cocktails, and traditional pours of absinthe.

Modern History

New energy revitalizes one of Vancouver's oldest neighborhoods

When you spot the terracotta-tiled Millennium Gate and the dragon-topped red lampposts, you know you've arrived in Vancouver's vibrant Chinatown. For a primer on the neighborhood, join **HISTORICAL CHINATOWN TOURS** to venture inside 100-year-old clan houses, where Chinese elders play mah-jongg, and behind the scenes at **SAI WOO**, the modern rendition of a restaurant that first opened in 1925. The sign out front is a crowd-funded replica of the original, which pays homage to Pender Street's neon glory days. Other highlights include the **DR. SUN YAT-SEN CLASSICAL CHINESE GARDEN**, an oasis of flowering trees, koi ponds, and stone courtyards built in Ming dynasty style, and the **RENNIE MUSEUM**, showcasing one of Canada's biggest contemporary art collections (by appointment) in the district's oldest building. This summer the **CHINATOWN STORYTELLING CENTER** opens with displays detailing the arduous path from Chinese immigrant to Canadian citizen. After dark, get a taste of the dining scene that's redefining Chinatown. Opt for mantou buns and "kick-ass fried rice" at **BAO BEI** or Japanese-accented Italian fare at its raved-about sister spot, **KISSA TANTO**. For a nightcap, try the Opium Sour at **THE KEEFER BAR**, a sexy twist on a traditional Chinese apothecary.

SEE IT VANCOUVER

Choose Your Adventure

Whether you're into art or the outdoors, there's a game plan for you



Nature Lovers

1 Walk through the rainforest of **Stanley Park** with Candace Campo, the First Nations owner of **Talaysay Tours**, and you'll start to see cedar bark as clothing, hemlock needles as the makings for tea. "The forest is our grocery store, our pharmacy," Campo says. Take that notion to **Deep Cove**, for a paddle up Indian Arm before checking out the **North Shore Spirit Trail**, a new greenway luring pedestrians, joggers, bikers, and in-line skaters.

Culture Vultures

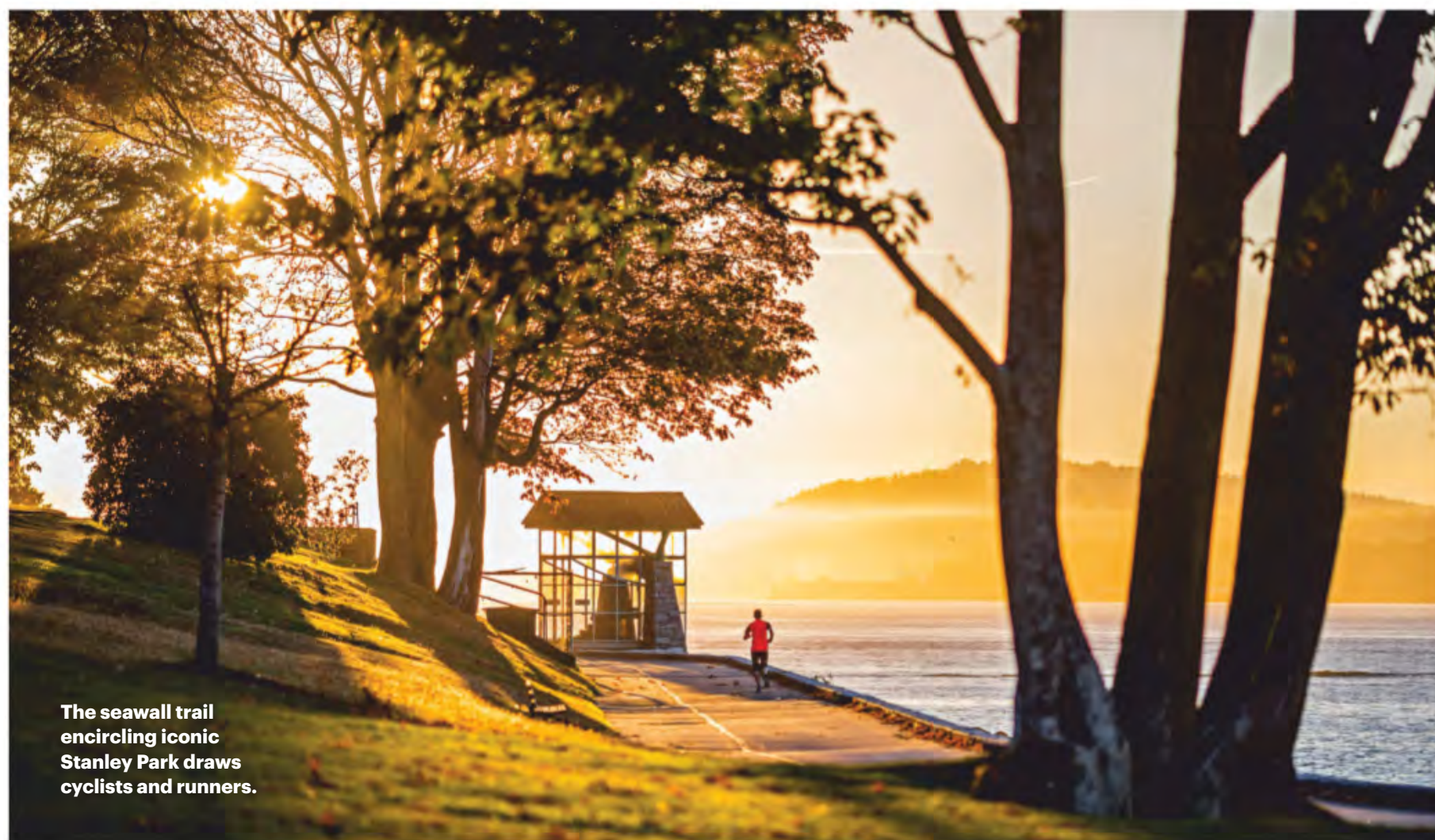
2 The **UBC Museum of Anthropology** curates innovative programs and in 2017 opened the Gallery of Northwest Coast Masterworks. Led by **Vancouver Art Gallery**, the contemporary art scene has expanded with the new **Polygon Gallery**, dedicated to Canadian photography. Fans of Coast Salish art should stay overnight at **Skwachàys Lodge**, where 18 rooms were designed by indigenous artists like Richard Shorty, whose work is sold in the lodge gallery.

Music Mavens

3 Downtown's Granville Entertainment District is still one of the best spots to catch a show, thanks to a trifecta of historic venues—**Vogue**, **Orpheum**, **Commodore Ballroom**—that attract top talent. In other areas, discover hidden gems such as the **Rogue Folk Club**, which stages bluegrass and roots music in a churchlike hall in Kitsilano. Below the cobblestone streets of Gastown, **Guilt & Co** offers pay-what-you-can jazz, soul, and cabaret.

Craft Connoisseurs

4 **Vancouver Foodie Tours** will shepherd you to the tastiest treats at the **Granville Island Public Market**: Oyama sausages, Benton Brothers cheeses, Lee's honey donuts. The neighborhood of East Van, aka "Yeast Van," hosts breweries and distilleries including **Bomber** and **Off the Rail** brewing and **Odd Society Spirits**. Go behind the tanks with **Canadian Craft Tours**. Nearby, the semimonthly **Eastside Flea** is a hip gathering of indie makers.



The seawall trail encircling iconic Stanley Park draws cyclists and runners.

Go With Nat Geo

To book these trips: natgeoexpeditions.com/explore or 888-966-8687

FOR LANDLUBBERS

On the eight-day "Canadian Rockies by Rail and Trail," travelers visit Vancouver before boarding the glass-domed *Rocky Mountaineer* train for an epic journey to the stunning landscapes of Banff, Yoho, and Jasper National Parks.

FOR SEAFARERS

Passengers embark from Seattle for "Exploring British Columbia and the San Juan Islands," an eight-day cruise along the coast to British Columbia with island hikes, kayak paddles into hidden coves, and a final stop in Vancouver.

EAT IT VANCOUVER



Native Roots

A pioneer of First Nations-inspired cuisine, the indigenous-owned **Salmon n' Bannock** serves the namesake *bannock* (a traditional quick bread) with mushrooms, as well as maple-cured salmon and slow-cooked bison. **Mr. Bannock**, the city's first indigenous food truck, began offering Squamish-style smoked meats and clay-oven creations last year. Head to **Forage** for dishes made with wild ingredients, and belly up to **Botanist** for cocktails like Candy Cap Magic, which arrives in a cloud of wood-scented dry ice.



Standout Sushi

The restaurant that introduced flame-seared *aburi* and pressed *oshi* sushi to Canada, **Miku** makes its own sake to pair with the Aburi Prime platter of nine rice bites topped with everything from jalapeno-spiced sockeye to Japanese Wagyu. **Kishimoto** offers six types of *oshi*—rectangular rice pedestals for delicacies such as pickled mackerel and flamed eel. Be sure to arrive early at **Raisu** for the Oceans Offering: 12 multicolored *oshi* squares presented in a bamboo box. The izakaya makes only 10 orders each night.



Dumpling Trail

Dumplings reign supreme in Richmond, an epicenter of Asian cuisine. Start at **Su Hang Restaurant** with intricately pleated *xiao long bao* (Shanghai soup dumplings) stuffed with pork and broth. The nearby **Dinesty Dumpling House** serves eight types of soup dumplings, plus pan-fried *guo tie* and water-boiled *shui jiao*. In summer, stroll to **The Dumpling Master** at the Richmond Night Market, whose gyoza range from kimchi beef to vegan spinach. Korean dumplings, or *mandu*, are a popular side dish at **Samsoonie Noodle & Rice**.



Tea Time

The Vancouver version of a London fog means a frothy Earl Grey latte laced with vanilla syrup. Just about every café makes one, and the flavor has seeped into **Earnest Ice Cream**, baked goods, and local beers. **Granville Island Tea Company** supplies 12 loose-leaf varieties of Earl Grey for custom cups, while **Parallel 49th Café & Lucky Doughnuts** boils its own vanilla bean syrup. **Cartems Donuts** has created a London fog variety stuffed with tea-infused whipped cream and iced with Earl Grey glaze. It also sells tasty vegan options.

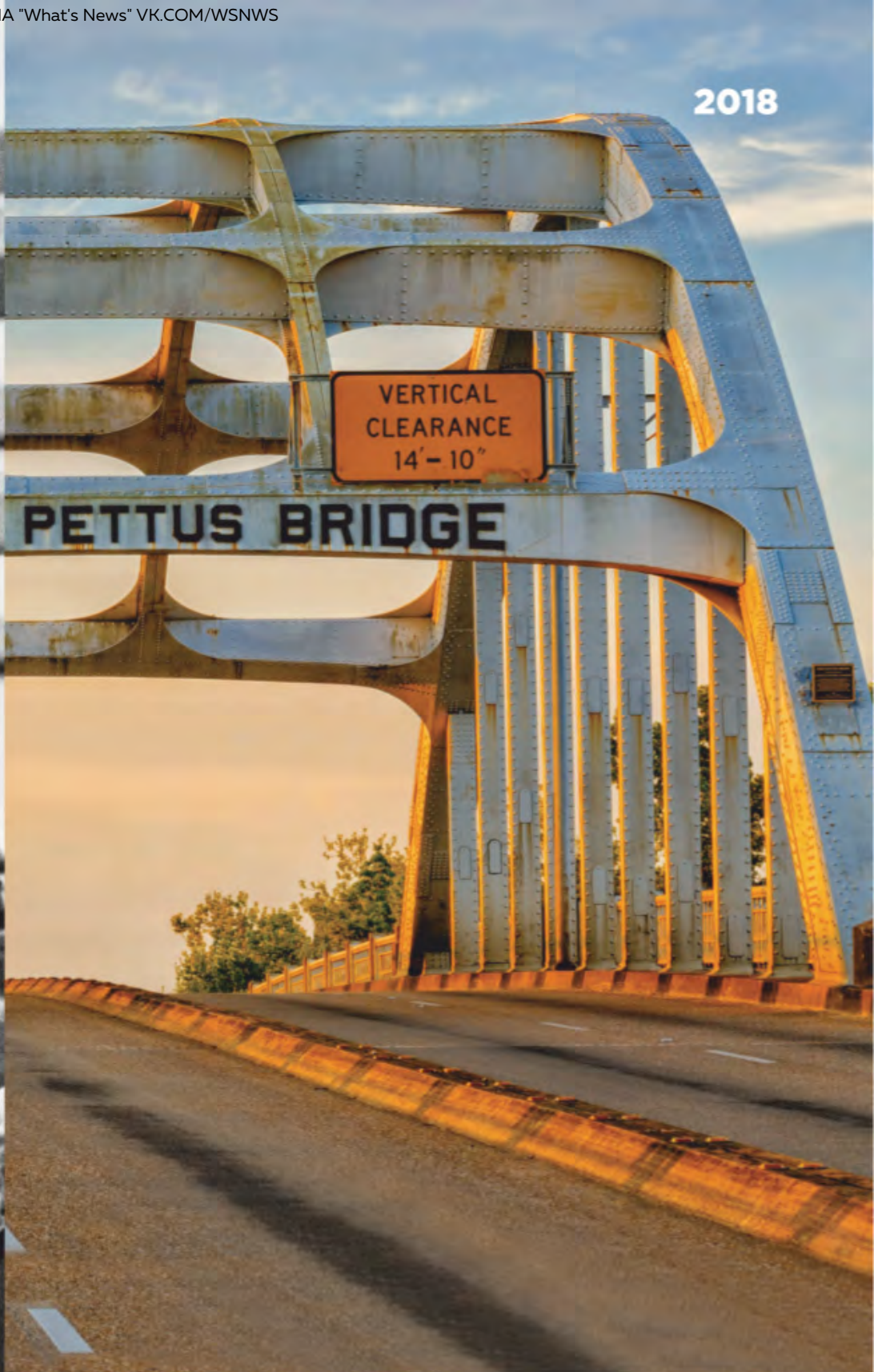


The Aburi Prime sushi platter at Miku (left) and head bartender Jeff Savage at Botanist

1965



2018



Walk in the footsteps of giants.

Voting-rights activists John Lewis and Hosea Williams led 600 peaceful marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965, only to be viciously attacked by state and local lawmen on what became known as Bloody Sunday. Today, you can walk across the historic Selma, Alabama, bridge, just one of dozens of inspiring landmarks on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. To learn more about heroes as diverse as Georgia's Martin Luther King Jr. and Virginia's 16-year-old Barbara Johns, go to civilrightstrail.com.

What happened here changed the world.



PLACES WE LOVE

UTAH

Otherworldly Destinations

Spots to visit here on Earth if you dream of traveling to space

Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic has launched a vessel that reached the edge of space. Elon Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, wants to ferry people to Mars by the hundreds, with an ambitious goal of landing the first humans on the red planet around 2025. With July 20 of this year marking the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moonwalk, all eyes are focused on the skies. National Geographic, too, has been celebrating the cosmos over the past year; see nationalgeographic.com/starstruck. It's enough to give Earthlings a serious case of interplanetary wanderlust, but you can't book your tickets just yet. For aspiring space tourists eager for a celestial experience, we offer some terrestrial places with a distinctively off-planet flavor. —*Brad Scriber*



1. ON THE GROUND

The red desert landscape of southern Utah mimics the isolation, geology, and palette of our planetary neighbor Mars. A hike through this region reveals deep red canyons, buttes, and pinnacles. Ignore the succulents and you can imagine yourself trekking in the Valles Marineris, Mars's version of the Grand Canyon. Rainbow Bridge National Monument, in this part of the state, is a

spectacular, 290-foot-tall natural arch made of red-brown Navajo and Kayenta sandstone. The region is also home to the Mars Desert Research Station, a two-story stand-in for a potential Martian research station, complete with simulated air locks. More than 1,200 people have participated in two-to-three-week missions at the station since 2001. The Mars Society, which advocates for sending humans to Mars as soon as possible, regularly recruits volunteers for future mission simulations.

EXPLORE MORE

Kennedy Space Center Merritt Island, Florida

At the legendary site of the Apollo 11 liftoff, visitors can see the launch pads, meet an astronaut, and join the Astronaut Training Experience, which mimics a mission to Mars with launching, landing, and space walking. kennedy.spacecenter.com

At the Mars Desert
Research Station
near Hanksville,
Utah, a crew member
contends with gravity
during a simulated
space walk.

CASSANDRA KLOS

PLACES WE LOVE CAPPADOCIA

2. IN THE AIR

If humans ever make it to Venus, they will likely have trouble landing on its volcanic surface, shrouded in clouds that rain sulfuric acid and bake the crust to some 880°F. Instead, visitors might one day float above the ground in the solar-powered cloud cities NASA has envisioned for the hypothetical High Altitude Venus Operational Concept (HAVOC) mission. At that higher altitude,

temperatures and other conditions would be less hostile. For the sensation of a vacation to Venus, head to Cappadocia, Turkey, where the alien-looking landscape of fantastical rock formations is best seen from above, on a hot-air balloon tour. In New Mexico, check out the mass ascension at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, where more than 500 colorful flyers launch in a rapid-fire spectacle. This premier ballooning event lasts for nine days in October.

EXPLORE MORE

Space Center Houston Houston, Texas

Tour the NASA Mission Control Center that monitored the moon landing, and in this summer's "Journey to Space" exhibit, enter a replica of the International Space Station. spacecenter.org



Nearly every day
at sunrise, hot-air
balloons ascend
into the skies over
Cappadocia, Turkey.

POLINA NAGAREVA

PLACES WE LOVE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

3. FROM THE EDGE

One of the most heavily cratered objects in our solar system is Jupiter's moon Callisto, discovered by Galileo in the 17th century. Valhalla, a crater on this moon's surface named for the home of fallen warriors in Norse mythology, is the largest at roughly 2,500 miles in diameter. Unlike Callisto, Earth is shielded from space rocks by its atmosphere but has nonetheless had its share of impacts. If you want the feeling of standing inside the rim of Valhalla, you can visit some of the 190 confirmed craters on our planet created by meteorites. The largest is Vredefort crater, a rumpled ring of mountains in South Africa some one hundred miles across. You can also check out the smaller, younger, and more intact Pingualuit crater, which rises from the tundra in northern Quebec. An early prospector mistakenly believed that the almost perfectly round feature was a

kimberlite pipe where he might find diamonds. Those who trek out to Pingualuit today will instead find the "crystal eye of Nunavik," a deep freshwater lake filled with extraordinarily clear water. A different sort of lake, one that's shallow and salty, marks the center of the Acraman crater, located in the Gawler Ranges of remote, arid South Australia.

EXPLORE MORE

Lowell Observatory Flagstaff, Arizona

As part of their prep for the moon landing, Apollo astronauts visited this site where Pluto was discovered in 1930. Take a look through the Clark Refractor telescope, which has been used to study moons, planets, and comets. This year the Giovale Open Deck Observatory debuts. lowell.edu

USGS/NASA LANDSAT DATA/ORBITAL HORIZON/GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

A satellite image uses false color to highlight the lake at the center of South Australia's Acraman crater.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY KIMBERLEY LOVATO



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Go green on the E-Grand Tour of Switzerland, the world's first long-distance road trip for electric vehicles. With ample electric car rentals (including ultra-cool Teslas) and more than 300 charging stations, the tour is an easy and incredibly scenic way to experience eco-friendly travel.

As you cruise along the clearly marked loop, see a highlight reel of quintessential Swiss sights: 5 Alpine passes, 12 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 22 glassy lakes, countless meadows and mountains, and a collection of vibrant cities and jewel-box villages. Capture Instagram-worthy pics at the official photo spots (look for the outsized red frames) and purchase a Grand Tour Snack Box (refillable on the route) to munch on cheeses, chocolates, and other regional road foods.


Driving clockwise from Geneva, here's a sampling of some of our favorite stops, including a nearby photo spot and Snack Box refill site (with an example of a taste-tempting local treat to try). To plan your own E-Grand Tour road trip, go to [MySwitzerland.com/grandtour](https://www.myswitzerland.com/grandtour).



1. GENEVA

Peaceful Pedal

Ariana Park, home to the United Nations' European headquarters, is the launchpad for Geneva Bike Tours' e-bike ride through the "peace capital," a nickname nod to the city's more than 200 international organizations. The three-hour tour passes iconic Geneva sights, such as **St. Peter's Cathedral**, built between 1160 and 1260. Climb 157 steps up to the cathedral's North Tower platform for panoramic views of the city and its eponymous lake.

 **Photo Spot:** Lake Geneva, Coppet

 **Snack Refill:** Nyon Region Tourism office—Alexandre chocolate

2. NEUCHÂTEL

Perfect Timing

Take a timely trip north of Neuchâtel to the neighboring towns of **La Chaux-de-Fonds** and **Le Locle**, collectively named a UNESCO World Heritage site for a continuous watchmaking culture dating to 17th century. Craft your own mechanical timepiece at an introductory workshop. View a timeline of watchmaking history at the **Watch Museum** of Le Locle.


 **Photo Spot:** Pont du Gottéron, Fribourg


 **Snack Refill:** Aebersold bakery, Murten—*Nidelkuchen* cream cake

3. BERN

Dive In

Jump feet first into daily life in Switzerland's compact capital city. Begin by shopping and strolling the four miles of *lauben* (covered walkways) in **Bern's Old Town**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Then, join the locals in a rite of summer—floating down the brisk **River Aare** to the **Marzili**, the city's crystalline riverside swimming pool.

 **Photo Spot:** Emmental Show Dairy, Emmental


 **Snack Refill:** Schloss Hünegg in Hilterfingen—*Nussgipfel* (croissant filled with hazelnut paste)

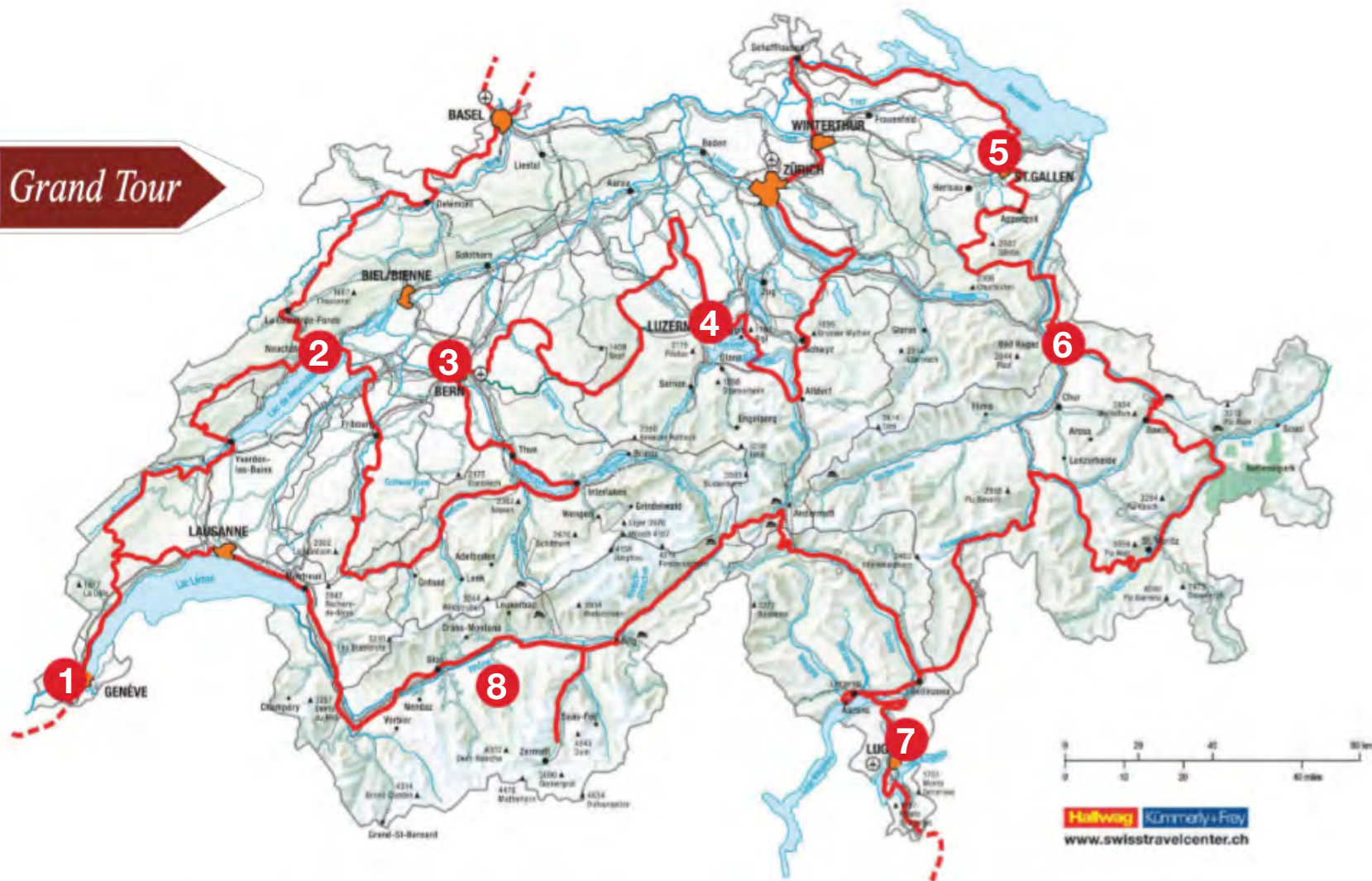
4. LUCERNE

Conquer the Dragon

Soar up the slopes of Lucerne's mystical, 6,981-foot **Mount Pilatus** (formerly the domain of a dragon, according to legend) on the **Dragon Ride** aerial cable way. Hike around the summit to see (on clear days) top-of-the-world views of the city, **Lake Lucerne**, and up to 73 Alpine peaks.

 **Photo Spot:** Château Gütsch, Lucerne


 **Snack Refill:** Aeschbach Chocolatier, Lucerne—chocolate pralines




5. ST. GALLEN

Treasure Trove

A 2,700-year-old Egyptian mummy, 170,000 books, and the earliest-known (eighth-century) architectural plan drawn on parchment are among the cultural gems housed in **St. Gallen's Abbey** of St. Gall, a UNESCO World Heritage site. After touring the abbey district, take a high-road hike crossing 18 bridges on the aptly named **Bridge Trail**.


 **Photo Spot:** Drei Weieren (Three Ponds), St. Gallen


 **Snack Refill:** Appenzeller Schaukäserei AG—*St. Gallen Biber* (almond-filled honey dough pastry)

6. MAIENFELD

Swiss Miss

Follow in the world-famous footsteps of Heidi, heroine of the classic children's novel, on the Heidi Trail from medieval **Maienfeld** to **Heidi Village**. From here, hike up to a lunch stop at the rustic **Heidialp chalet**, a replica of the high-meadow hut where Heidi spent summers with her grandfather.


 **Photo Spot:** Panorama Hotel Restaurant Heidihof, Maienfeld

 **Snack Refill:** milk & more, Davos—*Totenbeinli* (hazelnut cookies)

7. LUGANO

Warm Welcome

Benvenuto to sun-splashed Lugano, a Swiss slice of the Mediterranean on the Italian-speaking, southern side of the Alps. Dubbed the "garden city" due to an abundance of parks, blooming flowers and shrubs, and palm trees, **lakefront Lugano** ticks all the right boxes for a warm and relaxing rest stop.


 **Photo Spot:** Monte San Giorgio, overlooking Lake Lugano


 **Snack Refill:** Hotel Delfino, Lugano—*Ticino* alpine cheese

8. GRIMENTZ

Treat the Senses

Detour back in time to the postcard-perfect **Valais village** of Grimentz, where, June to October, nearly 35 species of geranium fill the air with a fragrant blend of ginger, mint, orange, and other intoxicating floral scents.

 **Photo Spot:** Stockalper Palace, Brig

 **Snack Refill:** Bäckerei Tea-Room Mathieu, Susten—*Traubenkerngipfel* (grape seed bread)

BEST LIST

FRIENDLIEST NEIGHBORHOODS



► Where are the most welcoming urban enclaves in the U.S.? Read on.



Travel is rooted in hospitality—in a welcoming gesture, a friendly smile, an accommodating spirit. In search of these qualities, we've developed—with the help of our data-crunching partners at Resonance Consultancy—this unique index of the 28 friendliest city neighborhoods in the U.S. (see page 35 for the methodology). Whether embracing its immigrant roots (San Jose's Japantown) or celebrating inclusion (Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen), an open-minded, open-hearted neighborhood can make travelers feel at home. This ultimate list offers starting points to explore American cities: enclaves full of places to delve into, people to meet, and enough bonhomie to make you want to return again and again.

*City reporting by
Jennifer Barger*

Historic Trinity Church is a popular meet-up spot in Boston's Back Bay.

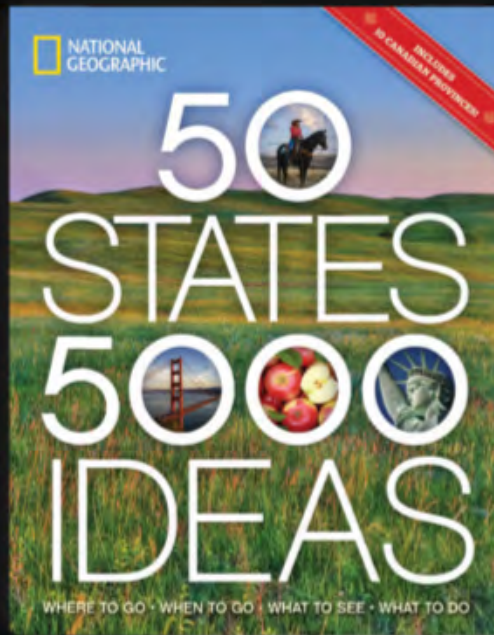
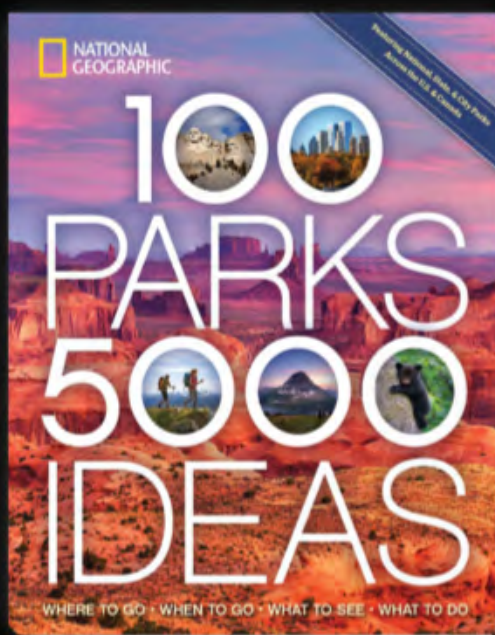


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BEST LIST FRIENDLIEST NEIGHBORHOODS



Chicago street life flows underneath the El's railway tracks in Wicker Park.

Albuquerque, NM

●● Rose-gold adobe buildings such as the 1793 San Felipe de Neri Church ring the central plaza of Albuquerque's historic **Old Town**, established as a Spanish colonial outpost in 1706. Tour the neighborhood on a Routes Rentals bike past galleries, souvenir shops, and restaurants like Golden Crown Panaderia for zippy green chili bread and local micro-brews. Dig deeper into the region's history and culture at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, with its weekend dance demos and restaurant serving Native American dishes (try the fry bread tacos).

Anchorage, AK

● Just southeast of downtown, **Rogers Park** lures bike commuters, runners, and cross-country skiers with its easy access to the paved, four-mile Chester Creek Trail, prime territory for moose spotting.

Asheville, NC

●● African-American businesses once thrived around **"The Block"** (Eagle Street and East End). Now, older establishments (barbershops, cafés) mingle with newcomers like the Foundry Hotel. Explore with Hood Huggers tours.

Austin, TX

●●● A grinning, eight-foot-tall statue of Willie Nelson holds court outside the Moody Theater, where *Austin City Limits* has been filmed since 1974 and music fans can attend tapings and concerts. He's in the heart of the **Second Street** district, a guitar pick's throw from arty Violet Crown Cinema and indie businesses—kid-friendly boutique Toy Joy or French bistro Le Politique with its pretty pastel decor. Stay at new The Line hotel, in a redone mid-century building.

Boise, ID

● In the tree-rich North End, **Hyde Park** leads to Camel's Back Park, a family-friendly, 11-acre green space with access to this outdoorsy city's extensive Ridges to Rivers trail system. Tri Town Bicycles rents wheels.

Boston, MA

●●● The Boston Marathon, Red Sox parades, and locals in search of chow or shopping hit the byways of **Back Bay**. Surrounding blocks house Beantown originals such as cozy, decades-old Trident Booksellers and Café.

Charleston, SC

●● In the 17th century, Huguenots (French Protestants) fled religious persecution in Europe and found solace and a new home in the Carolinas. Charleston's **French Quarter** (bounded by Broad Street to the south and the City Market to the north) encompasses steepled churches, columned civic buildings, and pale-colored houses, as well as art galleries and plush hotels. Southern food mecca Husk is still a coveted reservation. At the quarter's eastern edge, Waterfront Park's Pineapple Fountain is an homage to the colonial symbol for hospitality.

Chicago, IL

●● Onion-domed Orthodox churches and restaurants serving *varenyky* (potato dumplings) point to **Ukrainian Village's** Eastern European roots. Adjoining **Wicker Park** buzzes with independent boutiques, upmarket restaurants, and the Flatiron Arts Building with studios and performance spaces.

Colorado Springs, CO

●● The 101-year-old Broadmoor resort towers above **Broadmoor/Stratton Springs**, a mountain-framed zone that's also known for Seven Falls, a soaring box canyon with trails and waterfalls.

El Paso, TX

●● Nestled against the Mexican border are two of El Paso's oldest neighborhoods, **Chihuahuita** and **El Segundo Barrio**, developed in the late 19th century by immigrants fleeing the Mexican Revolution. Outdoor murals depicting Hispanic culture (conjunto accordion players, Aztec temples) pepper El Segundo Barrio, nicknamed the "Ellis Island of the Border." Download the free Visit El Paso app for a guided walking tour of the murals; afterward, grab a bowl of menudo at Jalisco Café.

Honolulu, HI

● **Waikiki's** two miles of powdery sand host some of the world's easiest-to-ride waves and best surf teachers, like Tony Moniz at Faith Surf School. The hike to the top of Diamond Head yields Pacific Ocean vistas.

Houston, TX

●● Mid-century bungalows and turreted Victorian houses draw young couples and singles to walkable **The Heights**, an older neighborhood a short bike-trail ride north of downtown Houston. Restaurants, many in vintage buildings, specialize in tacos, Vietnamese sandwiches, or Texas brisket (try the new Truth BBQ). Nineteenth Street is lined with quirky coffee shops and local retailers, including AG Antiques, a decor emporium in an old dry goods store. The Art Car Museum exhibits lavishly tricked-out wheels, as well as local and international contemporary artwork.

Las Vegas, NV

●● Count gourmets and performing arts fans among those enticed to **The Strip**, Sin City's ever changing 4.2-mile ribbon of mega hotels, glitzy live shows, and good-willed hucksterism. Entertainers encamped for the summer include Cirque du Soleil's O at the Bellagio, and Janet Jackson's *Metamorphosis* show at Park MGM through August 10. The jumbo, millennial-focused Park MGM development hawks Italian snacks and sizzle at Eataly or L.A. Korean bar fare at celebrity chef Roy Choi's Best Friend.

Los Angeles, CA

●● **Downtown L.A.** (with vibrant sub-neighborhoods like Little Tokyo and the Arts District) shows off diverse restaurants (Egg Slut, Sake Dojo) and galleries (Hauser & Wirth). A slew of urbane hotels open this year too.

Madison, WI

● During University of Wisconsin football games, the cheers of Badgers fans echo through the leafy, lakefront **university area** around campus. In summer Lake Wingra offers kayak rentals and the Madison Log Rolling school.

Miami, FL

●● Gleaming high-rises dominate the **Brickell/Hammock** skyline. This downtown neighborhood is known for Biscayne Bay views, boffo shopping at Brickell Center mall, and glitzy lounges like rooftop Sugar, for pan-Asian fare.

Myrtle Beach, SC

● A 187-foot-tall Ferris wheel rotates above Myrtle Beach's kid-pleasing **downtown** boardwalk. Slightly farther afield, the new Market Common development has cool local shops and cafés on a former Air Force base.



The Heights is an older Houston neighborhood with local shops and a 1920s theater turned live music venue.

BEST LIST FRIENDLIEST NEIGHBORHOODS

Naples, FL

●● This tony, Gulf-side city's thousand-foot-long pier and the surrounding **Old Naples** historic district summon glamorous, bygone Florida via vintage sorbet-hued bungalows, posh boutiques, and tropical plant-shaded outdoor cafés. Walking tours depart from the circa-1895 Palm Cottage, a tabby (shell-and-sand concrete) stucco charmer with a museum. And on the site of a 1920s oyster-processing plant on Naples Bay, funky Tin City hosts shops and crab shacks in brightly painted, metal-roofed cottages.

New York, NY

●●● "Times Square is such a world crossroads, which can make it such a friendly, accepting place whether you're into Broadway, music, or whatever," says Ben Pundole, vice president of brand experience at Edition Hotels. The brand opened an outpost in 2015 near Midtown's most famous intersection, further cementing the spiffed-up rep of the theater, chain store, and selfie-taking hub. Just to the west, LGBTQ-friendly **Hell's Kitchen** heats up with lively bars and restaurants, including new pescatarian hot spot Gloria.

Omaha, NE

● **West Omaha's** Boys Town was founded as an orphanage by Roman Catholic priest Edward Flanagan in 1917. Tours of the historic site (still a home for at-risk youth) take in Flanagan's 1929 house and a museum with artifacts such as the Oscar statuette Spencer Tracy won for playing Flanagan in the 1938 movie *Boys Town*.



Coit Tower stands tall over San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood.

Orlando, FL

●● On the southeast corner of Lake Eola Park, dog-friendly sidewalk cafés, live music spots, and a Saturday farmers market lend colorful **Thornton Park** an urban, walkable vibe. Get your art fix at Falcon Bar and Gallery.

San Diego, CA

●● It's not all old-school red-sauce restaurants in **Little Italy**. Year-old Little Italy Food Hall (try the Milanese-style pizza at Ambrogio 15), Ballast Point Brewery, and a Saturday farmers *mercato* attract foodies and families.

San Francisco, CA

●● Italian immigrants, beat poets, and jazz musicians have all found refuge in **North Beach**. Despite tourist crowds at City Lights Bookstore and Coit Tower, the *nonna*-and-pop warmth remains. "It's Italian with a West Coast vibe," says Thomas Medin, whose Local Tastes of the City Tours munch through spots like Stella Pastry and Mario's. Daytime browsers head to Lola for groovy greeting cards, and AB Fits for denim. Music-variety drag queen show *Beach Blanket Babylon*, now in its 43rd year, packs them in at night.

San Jose, CA

●● Anyone can join the hundreds of costumed, paper fan-wielding dancers who crowd **Japan-town's** North Fifth Street during San Jose's annual Obon Festival (July 13 and 14 this year), a traditional Japanese Buddhist party honoring ancestors. The eight-block area, one of three official Japantowns in the U.S., offers tastes of immigrant culture all year at sushi bars, family-run groceries, and the Shuei-Do Manju Shop, which serves rice-flour sweets in flavors such as cherry blossom. The Japanese American Museum of San Jose explores local history.

Savannah, GA

● Graceful 18th- and 19th-century homes and waterfront warehouses fill Savannah's **North Historic District**. The neighborhood features hopping River Street, where dueling candy shops push free praline samples, and lodgings such as the new Alida Hotel (named for an early preservationist). Storied mansions are open for tours, like the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters Museum where Regency architecture and artifacts contrast with exhibits on slavery.

Seattle, WA

●●● Gay-pride rainbows mark several crosswalks in **Capitol Hill**, where many of Seattle's artists and hipsters hang out. Creative energy pulses especially in the Pike-Pine zone, with live music clubs and vintage shops.

Tulsa, OK

●● Early 20th-century oil tycoons erected an impressive clutch of art deco buildings in this river city's **downtown**. It's adjacent to Tulsa Arts District, with galleries like 108 Contemporary, and music-filled Guthrie Green park.

Washington, DC

●● Stretching along its main drag, 14th Street, up to U Street, the **Logan Circle** neighborhood hums with design-centric shops and dozens of restaurants in early 20th-century and contemporary buildings. Snag a coveted rooftop spot at Colada Shop for a Cuban cocktail and empanada, or parse through old postcards and 1960s lamps at Miss Pixie's Furnishings & Whatnot. "I love walking down 14th Street on a nice day when people spill out of restaurants onto the sidewalk," says Amanda McClements, resident and owner of neighborhood decor shop Salt & Sundry.

OUR METHODOLOGY

In a survey created just for *Traveler*, Vancouver-based Resonance Consultancy combined its proprietary Best Cities analytics from more than 200 cities with statistics and user-generated data such as walkability, home affordability, public spaces, and the prevalence of third spaces (restaurants, breweries, cafés, and more). Resonance also considered social media and perception data from TripAdvisor and Yelp to generate a list of welcoming zip codes that the editors then correlated with existing neighborhoods to produce this Best List.



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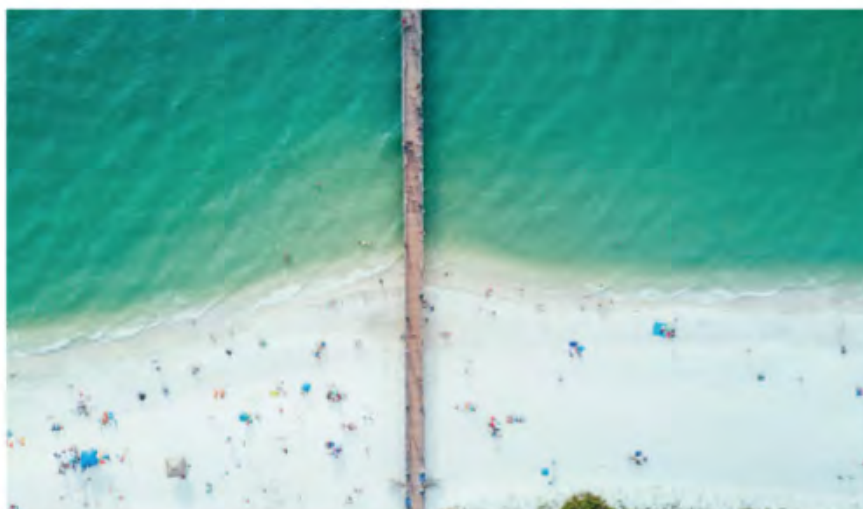
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GREAT ESCAPES SLOVENIA

A River Runs Through It

With its towering limestone massifs of the Julian Alps, plummeting gorges, and emerald river—and only about 3,000 permanent residents—the Trenta-Bovec-Žaga area of northwestern Slovenia has long been a sanctuary for European adventurers. Over the centuries, the region drew iron miners, shepherders, and alpinists, but its isolation dissuaded many from planting roots. Now an influx of

outfitters is breathing new life here, and sporty travelers are the winners.

"I don't know of many other places where you can ski, mountain bike, raft, fly fish, and paraglide in the same spring weekend, all in such a beautiful setting," says Petra Vasadi, owner of Soca Rider rafting company. Although visits surge in summer, the trails in and around 324-square-mile Triglav National Park afford ample room to roam, and the area's villages and mountain huts offer storybook surroundings for relaxing after a day outdoors.

—John Briley



CIRIL JAZBEC (ALL PHOTOS); NG MAPS



Swimmers cool off in the emerald waters of the Great Soča Gorge, near Bovec (opposite). Other area adventures include dog-friendly mountain hikes and thigh-burning bike rides over high-elevation passes.



RAFT THE SOČA RIVER

The Soča's mesmerizing hue, born of mineral deposits in the limestone bedrock, enchants visitors even before they dip a paddle in the more than 15 miles of Class I to IV rapids that run between the settlements of Lepena and Trnovo. The water color, boulder "gardens," and forest-lined gorges draw rafters and kayakers from around the world. And while the setting belies a dark history—Italian and Austro-Hungarian troops waged battles along this river in WWI—peace reigns today, especially in the crystalline pools and coves between rapids. The river runs higher during the spring melt, but summer and early fall offer warmer weather to offset the brisk water temperatures.

HIKE MOUNTAIN SLOPES

Tucked in a horseshoe-shaped valley, Trenta is a gateway to hundreds of miles of hiking, including the 12-mile Trenta-Kranjska Gora stage of the Alpe-Adria trail, which winds through forests, crests the 5,285-foot Vršič Pass, and pauses at a tiny wooden chapel built in 1917 by Russian prisoners of war to honor their fallen comrades. For a quicker high, board the cable car in Bovec and disembark—35 minutes and more than a vertical mile later—at Kanin ski resort, home to one of Slovenia's highest restaurants and routes ranging from gentle strolls to the demanding 8,487-foot summit of Big Mount Kanin, which offers views stretching to the Adriatic Sea, some 35 miles away.

CYCLE VRŠIČ PASS

With 50 switchbacks, an elevation gain of 4,035 feet, and soul-stirring vistas, the 39-mile Vršič Pass ride—from Kranjska Gora to Trnovo—is a bucket-list feat for hard-core cyclists. The asphalt and cobblestone route passes a monument to Julius Kugy, the Italian climber and botanist hailed for exploring these mountains; the Juliana Alpine Botanical Garden (most colorful in May and June); and a WWI cemetery. An easier 25-mile spin begins in the town of Tolmin and traces the turquoise Most na Soči lake before rolling through a series of villages, past the Babja Jama cave, where women and children reportedly hid during the 15th-century Osmani plunder, to the medieval town of Kanal and beyond.

WHY IT MATTERS WILDLIFE TOURISM



At Elephant Valley Thailand, outside Chiang Rai, tourists observe the animals from a safe distance.

Respect the Animals

Tips for wildlife encounters that promote sanctuary, not selfies

By Natasha Daly

Right away Elephant Valley Thailand felt different. The property, nestled in the forest on the outskirts of Chiang Rai, a small city in northern Thailand, was the fifth elephant attraction I'd visited in a week. I'd seen shows where elephants kicked soccer balls and twirled hula hoops. I'd watched people ride on their backs and swing from their trunks. I'd peeked into the stalls to which elephants returned after working, where they're chained by their ankles to posts.

But Elephant Valley was quiet. It was the first time all week that I'd seen elephants from a distance. One was bathing in a pond, alone. Another two were eating in the middle of a field. Wooden fences surrounded most of the fields—to keep us out, not them in, John Lee, a manager at Elephant Valley, told me. That's what struck me most: No one was allowed to touch the animals. These were elephants being elephants.

Elephant Valley Thailand, home to five elephants that previously worked in trekking camps and the

logging industry, is unlike most other elephant attractions in Thailand. Many of the country's 3,800 captive elephants live in camps that offer up-close, interactive experiences that allow visitors to ride or bathe the animals or watch them perform in shows. The activities are a massive draw for travelers from around the world, part of a lucrative global industry that puts people together with exotic animals for once-in-a-lifetime encounters.

It's what brought me to Thailand, a monthlong stop on a reporting trip for *National Geographic* magazine that took photographer Kirsten Luce and me to four continents over a year and a half. Our goal was simple: to look at the animals that entertain us and the people who seek them out. Those people are you and they're me. I have a photo of myself at two years old, perched on an elephant's back at a zoo in my hometown of Toronto, Canada. Eight years ago, on my honeymoon, I went swimming with captive manta rays in Mexico.

But seven years later, while reporting the story, I found myself watching a group of tourists pass around a tiger cub after paying a couple of dollars to feed him a bottle of milk—and wondering if anyone else was questioning why he wasn't with his mom.

It's complicated. People love animals and naturally want to get close to them—and genuinely want to learn more about them too. It's a desire that's increasingly fueled by social media, where travelers share their experiences instantaneously. The reality that many tourists don't see is that to stay in business, elephant interactions—and photo ops with tigers and swimming with manta rays—rely on a steady stream of working wild animals, all of which have been caught or bred or trained into submission.

And it's all too easy to misread signs of suffering. Captive elephants sway their trunks back and forth—almost as if they're dancing. In reality, it's a sign of psychological distress. Sloths seem to love cuddling, but their hug is really just an attempt to cling to what feels to them like a tree trunk. Dolphins appear to be smiling but that's the natural set of their mouths.

Travelers are increasingly recognizing that many animal tourist attractions may not be ethical. More and more backpackers are shunning elephant riding.

The industry knows it. Dozens of properties in Thailand now call themselves “sanctuaries.” Many look a lot like Elephant Valley and boast five-star ratings on travel sites such as TripAdvisor. But Kirsten and I found that, unlike Elephant Valley, almost every one offers elephant bathing for visitors who wish to splash with an elephant in a river or mud pit. Often the bathing is repeated all day long. And only trained elephants will submit to baths.

Jack Highwood opened Elephant Valley in 2016. The 40-acre property is his second elephant sanctuary, following a much bigger one he established in Cambodia. He chose to go small with the Thai sanctuary, installing inexpensive wooden fencing and minimal infrastructure because he wanted to make the model as easy as possible for others to copy. It felt peaceful, several visitors at Elephant Valley told me. As if the elephants didn't even know they were there.

While traveling the world, I spoke to tourists everywhere. In restaurants and hostels. At aquariums and monkey shows. I would often ask people if they prefer to have an up-close experience with an animal in captivity or observe it from afar in the wild. More often than not, they told me the latter. Yet captive encounters remain extremely popular. Maybe because an animal

Travelers are increasingly recognizing that many animal tourist attractions may not be ethical.

sighting is assured. Maybe because the animals seem happy, and it seems that your admission fee is going to contribute to someone's paycheck. Maybe, perhaps most compelling of all, because it gives you a photograph—you, together with an exotic animal—that can go straight to your social media feed, where likes and comments are guaranteed.

Across the Pacific, on the North Shore of Oahu, in Hawaii, there's a beach called Laniakea. People more commonly call it Turtle Beach, because sea turtles regularly come ashore. They'll pick a spot and sleep in the sun, sometimes for hours at a time. Volunteers are there every day to keep people away from the animals. When a turtle emerges from the sea, the volunteers block off space for it with rope, giving the turtle ample room to relax in peace.

One weekday in September, I sat with dozens of tourists behind the rope and watched them watching a turtle. For the most part, people were respectful. A few asked why they couldn't touch. It's illegal to touch sea turtles in Hawaii, the volunteers explained. And it's important to respect their space, they added. This is their beach too, after all.

It can be hard for most people to tell the difference between ethical and problematic wildlife experiences. There are many shades of gray. But you might follow a few simple guidelines:

- Seek experiences that offer observation of animals engaging in natural behaviors in natural environments.

- Do your research. A highly rated place may not necessarily be humane. Read those one- and two-star reviews. It's often in the pans that visitors chronicle animal welfare concerns.

- Beware of buzzwords like “gives back to conservation” and “rescue.” If a facility makes these promises yet offers extensive interaction, that may be a red flag.

Individual actions don't happen in a vacuum. When travelers decide they want something different, the wildlife tourism market will change.



NATASHA DALY is a staff writer and editor at National Geographic. Her feature story on hidden suffering in the wildlife tourism industry appears in the June 2019 issue of National Geographic magazine. To read more, visit natgeo.com/wildlifetourism.

LIKE A LOCAL SWEDEN



It's not normally good to be in the weeds, but Linnéa Sjögren, half of the professional seaweed foraging duo Catxalot, moved to Grebbestad for that very purpose. "Shellfish thrive here because our water is so clean. We chose to move closer because of the quality of edible seaweed."

Located along the Bohuslän coast, an area in western Sweden with ties to the Iron Age, Grebbestad has long been home to fishermen who depend on the North Atlantic's frigid waters. Life here revolves around a waterfront lined with weathered trawlers. Each May, the town roars to life as expert shuckers arrive to compete in the Nordic Oyster Opening Championship. When summer's in swing, Grebbestad draws vacationers who gorge on the fattest and most flavorful Nordic bivalves.

Adventures abound: embark on sea-based excursions that range from kayaking and seaweed harvesting to oyster safaris and island hopping around an idyllic archipelago dotted with wooden cottages painted in traditional *faluröd*.

—Lola Akinmade
Åkerström

In Grebbestad, a diner digs into seafood at Everts Sjöbod, which offers shellfish safaris.

Eat

A SIDE OF CHARM

In this compact, walkable town, the favorite haunts brim with character. Take **Restaurang Telegrafén**, nestled in a former telegraph station and pouring more than 30 different wines. Or **Grebys**, housed in a 1901 converted cannery where seafood traps hang above diners as they tuck into Arctic char and shellfish dishes. You can peel just-steamed crayfish at seasonal summer spot **Sältan Mat & Bar**, at Grebbestad's port, or watch your entrecôte being grilled in an open kitchen at fine dining destination **Latitud 58°**, in a secluded marina.

Stay

LULLED BY THE SEA

Reminiscent of a Nantucket cottage, the boutique **Grebys Hotell** has nine airy rooms in hues of soft gray with splashes of red and blue from British and U.S. flags. Book the "prince room" for a private balcony with lovely waterfront views. Guests can sail right up to Nordic spa resort **TanumStrand**, then dock their boat and settle into one of the 96 cabins or 165 contemporary rooms decked out in dark wood and navy blues. For lodging that's more modest—and more social—check into **Grebbestads Vandrarhem**, which provides hostel-style rooms and a communal kitchen and dining area under its angled ceilings.

Clockwise from top: Good times in Grebbestad include swimming in the sea, exploring the coast by sailboat, feasting on oysters, and sunbathing atop smooth boulders.



Play

FORAGING FOR FUN

Join librarians-turned-seaweed hunters Linnéa Sjögren and Jonas Pettersson of **Catxalot**, as they paddle kayaks around Grebbestad's archipelago in search of sugar kelp and sea lettuce. Back on land, learn to cook your catch with olive oil and salt on a portable stove. Stand-up paddleboarding with Ingela and Marcus Holgersson of **Skärgårdsidyllen** is another way to explore the water. But don't leave this oyster-obsessed town without taking a shellfish safari. Per Karlsson of **Everts Sjöbod** shares his harvesting methods and tips for shucking oysters raked from the docks of his 19th-century boathouse.

Shop

PORTERS AND POTTERY

At her namesake studio and shop, ceramic artist **Sanna Wijk** creates a mix of pastel and monochromatic kitchenware, dishes, flower pots, and vases. Beer buffs can buy a six-pack from Sweden's oldest microbrewery, **Grebbestad Bryggeri**, where the variety includes oyster porters, lagers, and fermented soft drinks called "must." (Groups of eight or more can purchase brewery tours.) Lovers of antiques head to **Riccus Antik** for nautical relics, lamps, and furniture from the 17th to early 20th centuries.



CRUISING KID-FRIENDLY

Family Affairs

Cruise journeys have always been ideal for families—ships navigate the ports, simplify the decision-making, and contain the chaos. The best routes provide innovative entertainment options for all ages. Case in point: the **National Geographic Global Explorers** family program on Alaska and Galápagos sailings inspires kids to develop the mindset and skills of an explorer. Here are other cruises we love.

—Sherri Eisenberg

1 New Ships

Carnival cruisers will jump for joy at the Sky Zone trampoline park when the line launches *Carnival Panorama* in December. West Coast itineraries will include California and Mexican Riviera routes. The kid-friendly cruise line—hello, waterslides, round-the-clock pizza, and self-serve ice cream—will introduce *Carnival Mardi Gras* in 2020 with two additional firsts at sea: a roller coaster and an Emeril Lagasse restaurant serving Cajun favorites.

2 Amazing Activities

So you think you can dance? Then hit the seas with American Ballet Theatre, which has partnered with **Celebrity** to stage dazzling shows and dance lessons. For rambunctious kids, a laser maze and obstacle course are activities aboard *Celebrity Edge*, launched last year.

Royal Caribbean's *Navigator of the Seas* features The Blaster, the longest cruise ship aqua coaster, and Riptide, a water slide that swerves out over the ocean. **Princess** debuts a Splash Zone for families aboard the *Caribbean Princess*.

3 Surprising Itineraries

Snorkeling safaris, kayak tours, and conservation talks about coral reef restoration will be star attractions come November, when **MSC Cruises** begins journeys to the beaches of its private island, Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, in the Bahamas.

Disney Cruise Line is adding seven European ports of call, including stops in Spain and France. In 2020 Disney returns to the Greek islands on itineraries that offer volcano hikes and cooking classes that cater to kids. (The Walt Disney Company is the majority owner of National Geographic Partners.)

The **National Geographic Sea Bird** plies Alaska's Lynn Canal, the deepest fjord in North America.

GO WITH NAT GEO FAMILY JOURNEYS

Kimono-clad women shoot a selfie in Tokyo's Asakusa district.



JAPAN

Storybook Adventures

At times Japan can seem like a land of fantasy brought to life. Indeed, it's the country of high-speed bullet trains and legendary samurai—both featured on a trip in the recently launched **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FAMILY JOURNEYS** collection. The 11-day adventure begins in Tokyo, where travelers of all ages experience the city's kaleidoscopic contrasts—from serene shrines to exuberant street fashions—and get hands-on during sumo wrestling, *taiko* drumming, and cooking classes. In Nagano, children and adults alike delight in the antics of Japanese macaques, or snow monkeys, before visiting a wasabi farm to sample pickles and ice cream flavored by the spicy green root. Then they head to Kyoto for exploration of temples and gardens, capped off with a cutting-edge lesson in samurai swordplay. —*Catherine Torphy*

BOOK IT natgeojourneys.com/family; 800-281-2354

ALASKA

Go Wild

Biggest, wildest, most spectacular: America's northernmost state is best described not in subtleties, but in superlatives. On this new trip, travelers discover Alaska's animals, landscapes, and frontier culture—from whales and glaciers in **Kenai Fjords** to the soaring summits of **Denali National Park**. Along the way, kids can participate in educational activities to earn their National Park Service Junior Ranger badges.

COSTA RICA

Jungle Life

Power down your devices and reconnect in the ultimate family playground. A new journey to Costa Rica offers full immersion in tropical nature through zip-lining, hiking, surfing, and horseback riding. In this biodiversity hotspot, budding naturalists learn about conservation at the National Geographic-supported **Monteverde Institute**, explore the cloud forest after dark, and spy wildlife from tree canopy to sea coast.

OBSESSIONS MOUNTAINS

Do the Height Thing

Whether we're climbers
or simply admirers,
summits lift our spirits

By Henry Wismayer

If you offered to transport me anywhere on Earth for a day, I'd choose a meadow in India beneath the mountain of my dreams. Picture it: A long crescent ridge curls uphill, then sharpens into a pinnacle of ice more than 25,000 feet high, the jet stream whipping a ribbon of cloud from its summit. A citadel of lower peaks rises up around it. And lurking within, at the foot of the holy mountain known as Nanda Devi, lies an inviolable Shangri-la of golden grassland, silent but for the rumble of avalanches and the plaintive bleats of wild sheep.

Remote, awe-inspiring, transcendent, the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, a glacial basin in India's Garhwal Himalaya, embodies everything that I love about mountain country. I've been fortunate to glimpse it from afar, and, since then, I've seen it daily in a panorama hung in a frame on a wall at home. Chances are I'll never reach it—an all but impassable box canyon, the Rishi Gorge, offers the only viable route in.

My interest in mountains, whether climbing them or merely being in their vicinity, began with stories of heroic mountaineers. There wasn't much altitude

where I grew up in London. But my baptism came on a gleeful school trip to north Wales spent bouldering among the granite crannies of Snowdonia. By the time a post-university trip took me from south to north up the spine of the Andes, bookish curiosity had graduated into full-fledged passion.

In the years that followed, as I began to travel in earnest, it became an obsession marked by euphoric highs and crushing lows. I've seen crystalline dawns break over the Peruvian cordilleras, spent nights beneath yak hides in a yurt among the Ala-Too steppes of Central Asia, sat mesmerized by the raging dance of Nyiragongo's lava lake in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I've also contracted snow blindness in Iran and almost fallen into a crevasse in Bolivia. I once skidded 300 feet down a couloir on my ass in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, my progress halted only by the sudden, cartoonish interjection of a snowdrift. An urge to ascend is not without its pitfalls.

Yet ask me to distill what it is about mountains that so possesses people and I falter. The legendary climber George Mallory, speaking to a *New York Times* journalist before his ill-starred attempt on Everest in 1924, uttered perhaps the most celebrated explanation for the pull of a high place: "Because it's there." That this glib refrain should have become so famous an explanation for summit fever—the default riposte to the lowlander's question of "why?"—tells you all you need to know about the visceral, ambiguous allure of mountains. Some of us just can't help seeing a peak without wondering what might be visible from its summit, and we're not sure why.

This much is certain: the fever that gripped Mallory is an urge more cultural than instinctive. For millennia, our relationship with mountains was defined by fear. They were perilous obstacles, best avoided. Only in the 18th century, as early holidaymakers realized that you can't enjoy a view without having a vantage, did trepidation evolve into active adventuring. Those fearsome characteristics of peaks—the exposure, the extremity, the potentially fatal consequences of a misplaced foot—have now become reasons to go.

For me, however, the emotional draw of mountains has always taken precedence over the pursuit of adrenaline. The act of ascending embodies escape; the sight of the lowlands receding—houses reduced to child's bricks, humans to ants—provides sweet refuge for the urban soul. People talk of changing perspectives, of senses heightening in the face of natural permanence and grandeur. The world's great mountains resist any



Alpamayo, in Peru, has a distinctive fin shape. Opposite: Sunset lights up India's Nanda Devi.

Peak Beauty

ALPAMAYO, PERU (19,511 FEET)

Often described as the most beautiful mountain in the world, Alpamayo is a soaring shark's fin in Peru's Cordillera Blanca, one of the best trekking regions in South America. As the peak is a technical climb, most hikers are content just to be in its presence.

MACHAPUCHARE, NEPAL (22,943 FEET)

An icon of the Nepalese Himalaya, Machapuchare is held sacred by Hindus and off-limits to climbers. Views of its twin "fishtail" summits are nonetheless a highlight of the legendary Annapurna Circuit.

DAMAVAND, IRAN (18,402 FEET)

The highest volcano in the Middle East is also its loveliest: an archetypal snowcapped cone, visible on clear days from the capital, Tehran. Damavand can be climbed by determined amateurs.

attempt to civilize them—they are too tall, too steep, too wild, too cold. Now more than ever, it's heartening to find a landscape that cannot be tamed. No wonder that mountains from Kinabalu to Kailash remain objects of veneration.

As barriers to inherent progress, mountains have always forced travelers to slow down and mingle with the communities that cling to them and, more often than not, to avail themselves of a stranger's kindness. Once, in the Ethiopian Highlands, a family welcomed me into their mud-walled hut as a storm broke over the plateau. They turned out their meager larder, the mother roasting coffee, the father breaking bread, as the children glared at me, an alien in their midst.

It's for moments like this, as much as for the varied topography, that a love affair with high places is a quest without end. It would take many lifetimes to properly explore the world's great ranges, many more to tread the obscure trails hidden among cliffs and clouds. Did you know that the tablelands of Venezuela were the inspiration for Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*? Or that no single point of little Lesotho sits below 4,500 feet? My own list grows.

And even when I'm tied to lower ground—when I'm stuck, as now, behind a computer screen in England—I can still retreat to the mountains in my mind. To that place in India, under a cerulean sky. Because for me, as for many, a traveling life will always defer to John Muir's simple invocation: "The mountains are calling and I must go."

HENRY WISMAYER ([@henrywismayer](https://twitter.com/henrywismayer)) has written for the *New York Times Magazine*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

Ready.

Set.

The Tobago Cays, an uninhabited archipelago of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, are surrounded by turquoise waters and coral reefs.

**Hike, bike,
and dive
into history
on these
15 global
adventures
for all ages**

*By Heather
Greenwood Davis*

Summer!

01.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Caribbean Escapes

St. Vincent has waterfalls to sit under, fern-laden rainforest paths to hike, and even a volcano to climb, but make time to explore beyond this main island as well. The Grenadines comprise 32 additional islands and cays, nestled in the clear Caribbean Sea. On Petit St. Vincent Private Island Resort, a National Geographic Unique Lodge, the Jean-Michel Cousteau diving center offers expert-led underwater reef tours. Or explore the Tobago Cays on a daylong charter of the 115-foot *Star of the Sea* yacht, based in Bequia. natgeolodges.com/explore; bequiabeachhotel.com/yacht-star-of-the-sea

02.

HONG KONG

Dragon's Tales

Hike the scenic peaks of the Dragon's Back Trail with Wild Hong Kong and you'll see a greener side of this skyscraper-filled city. Then retreat to the cool confines of the striking new Xiqu Centre, an arts venue dedicated to Cantonese opera and music. wildhongkong.com; westkwoon.hk/en/xiqu-centre

03.

GSTAAD, SWITZERLAND

Mountain Mania

Pick up a backpack preloaded with all the makings of a cheese fondue at Molkerei (dairy shop) in the valley town of Gstaad, then board a gondola at the base of Wispile mountain and head 6,270 feet up to the top for a hike and picnic amid the wildflowers. Or hire a guide and hop on a mountain bike (traditional or electric) to tackle the chalet-strewn hills and valleys—stopping only for selfies with Alpine bovines. For a real thrill, make your way to the Alpine Coaster, a half-mile descent on a toboggan track where you're in control of your speed up to almost 25 miles an hour, and kids ages nine and up can drive solo. gstaad.ch; glacier3000.ch



N. EISELE-HEIN/LOOK/ALAMY; PREVIOUS PAGES: BLUEORANGESTUDIO/ALAMY



**Mountain bikers pedal through the Col des
Andrérets pass near Gstaad in the Swiss Alps.**

04.

PARIS, FRANCE

Garden Party

Play *pétanque*—a popular lawn bowling game—or simply stroll the avenues at any one of Paris's lively gardens. At Jardin du Luxembourg, families can sail a vintage toy boat (rent them in the park) at the Grand Bassin duck pond or enjoy Théâtre des Marionnettes, a puppet show dating back to 1933. The new Parc Rives de Seine fills with sun loungers and palm trees during the annual riverside Paris Plages festival. Festival FNAC Live and other free music events spark hot nights with cool sounds. fnac.com/fnaclive

Sailing antique wooden boats is a popular pastime in front of the 17th-century Palais du Luxembourg, now the seat of the French Senate.



05.

VERO BEACH, FLORIDA

Creatures from the Sunny Lagoon

Spot manatees and dolphins, learn about oysters and the Indian River Lagoon estuary system (the most biodiverse in North America), and canoe mangrove forests at the Environmental Learning Center. Take an evening walk during sea turtle nesting season at Disney's Vero Beach Resort (the Walt Disney Company is the majority owner of National Geographic Partners). Sip an orange slushee at Countryside Citrus. discoverelc.org; verobeach.disney.go.com; countrysidecitrus.com

06.

PUERTO RICO

Sky Highs

In El Yunque National Forest, the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. Forest Service, glimpse bright green Puerto Rican parrots that scientists are working to save from extinction. Tour the Arecibo Observatory, where a 1,000-foot-wide radio telescope searches our skies for alien intelligence. nationalforests.org; naic.edu/ao/landing

09.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Drama Club

Beyond the Smithsonian, the arts thrive throughout the nation's capital. Inside Artechouse, interactive digital technology takes images and brings them playfully to life. And 90-plus theaters, including five dedicated to young audiences, mean the D.C. area provides compelling storytelling onstage nightly, from Shakespeare tragedies to Spanish-language plays. artechouse.com; theatrewashington.org

10.

NAMIBIA

Lots of Spots

Twenty-five percent of all wild cheetahs live in Namibia. Livestock farmers and hungry cheetahs don't usually mix well, but Naankuse Foundation Wildlife Sanctuary came up with one solution. Live-capture cages set by the farmers and managed by the Naankuse team are

helping to reestablish the country's wildlife population. Visitors to the sanctuary can sleep at the on-site lodge, participate in wildlife walks, or sign up for volunteer opportunities. Money collected helps preserve all six big cat species that call Namibia home. naankuse.com

07.

GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA

Stratified Superlative

Shift your perspective on the Grand Canyon, celebrating one hundred years as a national park in 2019. OARS rafting outfitter leads Colorado River trips that range between five and 18 days and have you looking up the mile-deep canyon instead of down into it. (Kids as young as seven can raft Class III rapids.) Book a Grand Canyon mule trip to descend the Bright Angel Trail and enjoy an overnight stay at the base. Or come on a summer Saturday and you can ride one of the Grand Canyon Railway's steam locomotives that run on french fry oil. oars.com; grandcanyonlodges.com; thetrain.com

08.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Ancient Secrets

The new Royal Alberta Museum opened late last year with a mandate to be inclusive of First Nations culture. Today, the largest museum of natural and human history in western Canada weaves native languages and

narratives throughout its six interactive galleries. The Manitou Stone, a 4.5-billion-year-old meteorite with great spiritual significance for First Nations and Métis people, sits at the center of a circular space intended for quiet

reflection. The addition of the museum has revitalized the family-friendly Arts District that is also home to the Art Gallery of Alberta and the Winspear Centre. royalalbertamuseum.ca; exploreedmonton.com

11.

BERMUDA

Might As Well Jump

Sea-cliff climbing and cliff jumping are popular activities at Bermuda spots such as Admiralty House Park. Prefer having a guide? The "Stay Together, Play Together" package at the Newstead Belmont Hills Resort, less than four miles away, includes a Jet Ski and cliff jumping adventure with K.S. Watersports, as well as a soft place to land at day's end. newsteadbelmonthills.com



A cheetah climbs
a tree for a better
vantage in the
Namibian desert.



Mashpi Lodge is nestled in Ecuador's cloud forest, home to hundreds of species of birds, frogs, orchids, and butterflies.



MICHAEL KLEINBERG

12.

BOTSWANA

Safari Spectacular

With access to wonders such as Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River, Botswana appears on many bucket lists. Take the country at a slower pace on a guided walking safari in the

Okavango Delta. Kids who may struggle on traditional safari experiences will like the 12-day "Botswana with Kids" itinerary from Deeper Africa. Designed by director and former school

teacher Karen Zulauf, it features activities, such as animal tracking, drumming, and basket crafting, in between the hippo, elephant, and meerkat sightings. deeperafrica.com

13.

OZARKS, MISSOURI

Lake Breaks

The Lake of the Ozarks region offers families easy choose-your-own adventure options that include 32 area trails, two state parks, and four explorable caves. Farther south, relax in a log cabin at Big Cedar Lodge before horseback riding or biking at Dogwood Canyon Nature Park. funlake.com; bigcedar.com; dogwoodcanyon.org

14.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Heritage Trail

Just outside Savannah, the Pin Point Heritage Museum explores the history of the Gullah, or Geechee, people through scavenger hunts, videos, and audio exhibits. The Pin Point community, on the Moon River shores, was founded by free Africans whose ancestors first came here (and to nearby barrier and sea islands) as slaves. The Creole dialects they developed are now rarely spoken. Visitors can still learn some Gullah words and phrases from descendants in communities, such as Hog Hammock on Sapelo Island, along the 490-mile Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. chsgeorgia.org; gullahgeecheecorridor.org

15.

ECUADOR

In the Clouds

The Sky Bike at Mashpi Lodge allows riders gliding treetop views of the Chocó cloud forest. Inside this National Geographic Unique Lodge, loggers turned staff conservationists give talks on preservation efforts. For multisport adventures, Andando Tours offers new family-friendly itineraries. visitgalapagos.travel/ecuador-itineraries; natgeolodges.com/explore

HEATHER GREENWOOD DAVIS ([@greenwooddavis](https://twitter.com/greenwooddavis)) is a contributing editor of *Traveler* and the founder of Globetrottingmama.com.

The Beautiful Road

An epic drive through New Zealand reveals
a nation of warmth and wonder

By **CARRIE MILLER**



I was expecting to cross paths with a *T. rex* at any moment.

The rugged west coast of New Zealand's South Island can seem prehistoric like that. Half-walking, half-sliding down a narrow trail overhung with trees dripping tangled moss, I was looking for Merv.

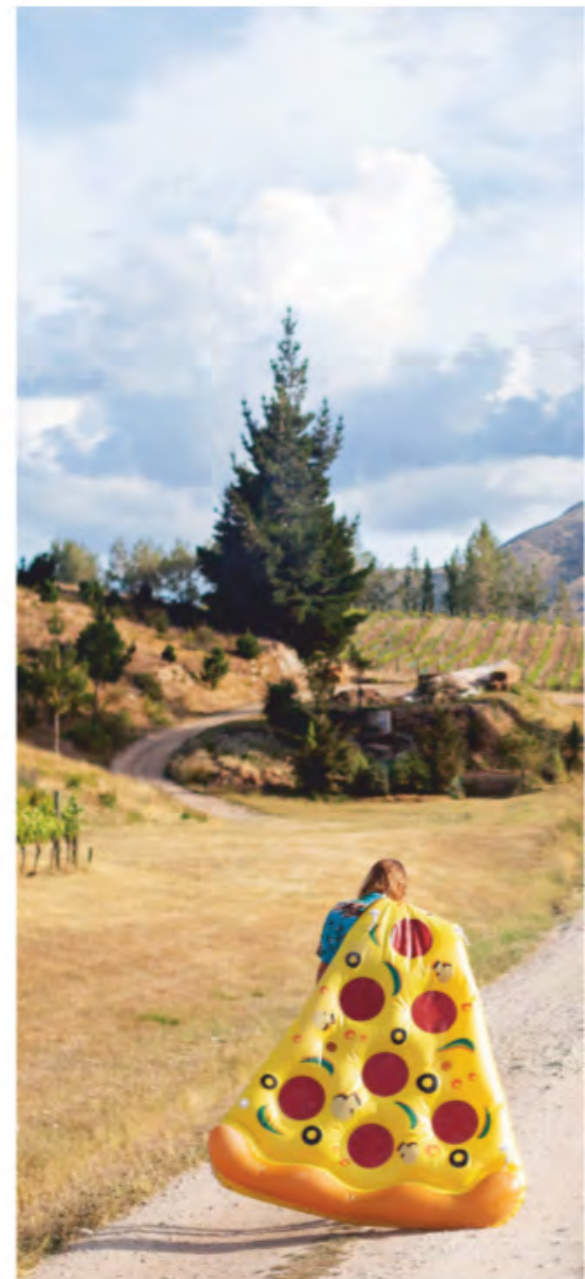
I had started my search in Jackson Bay, a quiet fishing village with only a handful of year-round residents and about 30 houses. As I got out of my car, a slender woman with short blonde hair called out to me from a sunny porch, where she was drinking a cup of coffee. She took one look at me and asked if I was lost.

"I'm looking for Merv?" I said. It was actually a question.

"He's up the river whitebaiting," she replied. "I'm his wife. I'll tell you how to find him."

This was how I ended up bush-bashing on a muddy trail, looking for Merv's whitebaiting stand. Whitebaiting stands are gangplank-looking, cobbled-together docks reaching out over rivers feeding into the ocean, the perfect vantage points from which to net juvenile *Galaxiidae*, a prized fish delicacy.

I was on an epic road trip, traveling from Lands End hotel, in Bluff, the southern tip of the South Island, to Cape Reinga, at the top of the North Island. Even after 15 years of living here, a New Zealand road trip is my favorite travel experience. There is a feeling throughout this land—a warmth, a welcoming, a sense of being looked after—that is difficult to put your finger on. The Māori word for it is *manaakitanga*. Loosely translated, the word means hospitality.



New Zealand scenes, clockwise from top left: walking home after a day floating on Lake Wanaka; a surfer ready to hit the waves at Piha Beach; Lake Wanaka's famed solitary willow tree; sheep huddling on a high country station near Lake Wakatipu. Previous pages: Sunlight spills over the Remarkables mountain range in the Otago region on the South Island.

MARK CLINTON (RAFT), JOSH GRIGGS (SURFER, SHEEP), JOHAN LOLOS (TREE); PREVIOUS PAGES: STEPHEN KING



Tangaroa, the Māori god of the sea, gazes fiercely in the form of a *pouwhenua*, a symbolic carved wooden post.



This culture of looking after one another came to worldwide attention in the aftermath of the March 2019 terrorist attack on two Christchurch mosques. The way New Zealanders responded to the tragedy—rallying together with a national call of “this isn’t us,” the outpouring of messages of inclusion—was an example of manaakitanga in action.

My road trip was inspired by manaakitanga, its itinerary decided by people I met along the way—their recommendations, their generosity, their good graces—as I traveled from one connection to the next on a daisy chain of friendly gestures. It was a pattern I knew well after years of living here. Some of my best moments in this country have been serendipitous, like the wrong turn that introduced me to a remote hamlet that netted me an impromptu invitation to a birthday party.

My search for Merv had begun at a birthday gathering in Bluff, exactly three days and 285 miles earlier. I was sitting in the lounge of Lands End, with its facade of windows facing the ocean.

I met the owner and birthday celebrant, Lynda Jackson, when I checked in, and now I was drinking a beer with her; her husband, Ross; and another guest, Gaye Bertacco from Christchurch. The mood in the tavern felt both lovely and lonely—fitting for a bar at the end of the world. “I’m here to pick up my husband, Mark,” Gaye said. “He’s a fisherman, and he’s been out at sea for a week. He’s tired, you see, and I worry about him driving all the way back to Christchurch.”

As if on cue, Mark Muir chose that very moment to walk in the door. “I’m fine,” he said, and the mood shifted.

A few B.man beers later, Gaye and Mark invited me to join them for dinner at Oyster Cove, the restaurant next door. Over locally sourced spiny rock lobster and muttonbird (a Kiwi specialty and traditional Māori *kai*, or food), we watched the fishing boats returning, their red and green lights winking in the dark, as Mark told us stories of the sea.

“I grew up fishing in Greymouth. There are some real characters on the west coast,” Mark said. “You should look up Merv Velenski in Jackson Bay if you go that way. Merv’s the biggest character of them all. He’s been fishing as long as I’ve been alive. He’d give the shirt off his back to anyone, and they want to give their shirts to him. He’ll be all right if you tell him I sent you.”

MUDDY AND MERV-LESS, I returned from my hike through what was seemingly the Cretaceous period to Jackson Bay. There wasn’t much to this place but beauty. The beech- and rimu-shaded road dead-ended in a settlement with a few houses, a bright-orange café with a blue roof (the Cray Pot), and a long, weathered wharf extending into the turquoise sea. It was a slice of unspoiled paradise, one of the many places in this country

that visitors—even locals—rarely see, 32 miles off the beaten track south of Haast.

Back on the sun-soaked porch, as I was telling Liz Velenski (Merv’s wife) about my lack of success tracking him down, Merv pulled up in his truck. “There’s the old bugger now,” Liz said. “I’ll get some tea.”

Merv greeted me with a polite reserve, offering a handshake that could crush bricks. I told him Mark Muir sent me.

“My brother worked for Mark for a long time,” Merv said. “Mark’s got a well-built boat.”

We talked for an hour. Merv was one of those fascinating people who has done a little bit of everything: an army stint in Malaysia, Borneo, and Thailand; deer antler velvet harvesting; sawmill work; a lifetime of fishing; and now stone carving.

“We’ve been in Jackson Bay for more than 40 years,” Merv told me. “There was nothing here when we came, and there’s no place I’d rather be. But people miss it. You gotta get down the side roads and have a look. That’s where you meet the workers. Go and talk to them and you’ll learn 10 times more than you would in any tourist town. That’s where you see New Zealand.”

Merv and Liz sent me away with a friendly wave and two parting gifts: the phone number of an old army buddy of Merv’s living in Hokitika, and a cooked crayfish wrapped in a page of the *Otago Daily Times* for my lunch.

I WAS 733 MILES NORTH OF JACKSON BAY, just inland from the west coast of the North Island this time, at the Whangamomona Hotel. It’s perhaps the most remote country hotel in New Zealand, located on the Forgotten World Highway (State Highway 43) that runs between Stratford and Taumarunui. Whangamomona is New Zealand’s only republic, having declared its independence 30 years ago.

The Forgotten World Highway is one of those places you hear about but, well, forget. A Wellington-based friend reminded me about it on my way north, and I found myself there drinking beer from a borrowed glass.

“This is the only watering hole within an hour’s drive, so the locals gather here,” said Vicki Pratt. She and her husband, Richard, own the Whangamomona Hotel. Handles (New Zealand-speak for pint glasses) hung on the wall, each bearing a yellow cattle ear tag with an identifying number. I was drinking from number 13.

“That’s Pete’s glass. He lives in the woolshed down the road,” Vicki said. “I don’t think he’ll mind.”

If someone is trying to reach a Forgotten World Highway local who doesn’t have a phone, they call the hotel and leave a message with Vicki or Richard. They, in turn, leave a note in the person’s beer glass.

“Handle mail. It works well,” Vicki grinned.





Lupines bloom every November on the shores of glacial Lake Tekapo in the South Island's Mackenzie Basin.







Kiwi treats, clockwise from top left: cupcakes at Floriditas café on Wellington's Cuba Street; dizzying views of Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu from Skyline adventure park; a feathery seed head of clematis, whose white-blossomed variety is a traditional harbinger of spring for Māori; loungers enjoying Karaka Café's cushions on the Wellington waterfront.



KRISTA ROSSOW (CUPCAKES, LAKE, WATERFRONT), CATHERINE THOMPSON (CLEMATIS SEED); PREVIOUS PAGES: SAM DEUCHASS PHOTOGRAPHY

As we were chatting, a baby pig streaked into the bar, gambling about the forest-green carpet and racing around the large barrels that double as tables. It was followed by a more hesitant lamb (named Roast), and two tired-looking cyclists seeking a hot meal and a place to pitch a tent.

The pig and Roast were ushered back outside while I joined Jamie Lessard and Alanah Correia—twentysomething Nova Scotians who were 10 months into a planned 15-month trip—for a drink. “We’re riding our visa as long as we can,” Jamie said.

They had spent the winter in the Coromandel Peninsula and were now cycling south. “We never would have biked here if someone we met hadn’t told us about it. It’s totally rerouted us,” Alanah said.

Visitors to Whangamomona have traditionally been New Zealanders, but in the past two years it’s been attracting more overseas travelers, most of them on straight-through day trips to collect novelty republic stamps in their passports.

“We take in about \$16,000 a year over the bar for the community selling Whangamomona passports and memorabilia,” Vicki said. “It would be nice if some of these international visitors would stay longer. The ones that do stay have a really good time. We look after them. This is a great place to meet locals.”

Once a bustling frontier outpost of 300 residents at its 1895 settling, Whangamomona now has “10 or 11 town residents, with maybe 120 in the wider area,” Richard told me.

We were sitting in front of the fire, looking at old photographs. The Forgotten World Highway hadn’t changed much: parts of it just two lanes and unsealed, seeming to wind forever from here to there.

A boundary battle split the region in half, kindling the revolution that led to the republic. “You can’t just change the boundary and change where people are from,” Richard said. “And they didn’t consult us. Initially it was a gesture, but we’ve always taken a little pleasure in the rebellion. We’re a stubborn, amiable people.”

“I think that applies to all New Zealanders,” Vicki added. “We look after each other, especially in rural communities. Manaakitanga is what I grew up with, even if I didn’t know the name for it. I think it has to do with the fact that everyone knows each other in New Zealand. Guests come in, and within three sentences I’ll know someone they know. And I like that.”

MY KAYAKING GUIDE, Cait Disberry, and I realized we had both lived in the same tiny beach town (population 4,848) 30 miles northwest of Wellington, New Zealand’s capital. It’s rare to find someone who knows where Raumati Beach is, much less has lived there. It’s that “three sentences” connection Vicki talked about.

I was on a kayaking tour with Cathedral Cove Kayaks, in Hahei, on the Coromandel Peninsula. The cycling Nova Scotians had told me Cathedral Cove was a must-visit destination. With





CAROLINA GARCIA-PARIS (BOULDERS), ARNO GASTEIGER (HOTEL)

According to Māori legend, the boulders (left) on Moeraki Beach are the remains of eel baskets and gourds washed ashore from the sailing canoe that brought the ancestors of the Ngāi Tahu tribe to the South Island. On the North Island, the Whangamomona Hotel (right) is the main hub in the quirky community's self-declared republic.



its lush landscape, secret coves, and hot-water beaches, only two and a half hours' drive from Auckland, the country's largest city, this siren-song town is a place that makes visitors seriously study property listings. It has about 400 permanent residents, but that number explodes with New Zealand holidaymakers during the summer.

Cathedral Cove, two secluded beaches joined by a soaring arch, can be reached by a one-hour walking track or by the water. I chose the water.

Our three-hour kayak tour led us across the clear, green waters of the Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve. This productive reserve has seen a huge increase in marine life since its establishment 26 years ago. Signs were evident everywhere I looked, from the multitude of ocean birds on their rock perches drying their wings to bright flashes of fish to the dozen small stingrays that zoomed around in the aptly named Stingray Bay.

From here, Andy Mora, our lead kayak guide, pointed out to us the Mercury Islands in the distance. "This area is where Captain Cook pinpointed the transit of Mercury in New Zealand," he said.

W

HICH BROUGHT ME TO the arrival point of another great voyager: Kupe, the extraordinary navigator of Māori legend. I had traveled 370 miles north of the Coromandel Peninsula to Cape Reinga, the northernmost point of New Zealand that's accessible to visitors, and the end point of my own voyage. A short white lighthouse crowned a dragon's-snout stretch of land marked only by an ancient *pohutukawa* tree, as two bodies of water—the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean—tussled and surged together,

Cape Reinga, the northernmost point of New Zealand that's accessible to visitors, is also a site of spiritual significance for Māori.



creating a white line in the waves. This place is significant as the landing spot of Kupe, who found his way here a thousand years ago from the eastern Pacific. But Cape Reinga is also important as the place from which a Māori person's spirit departs on its way to the next world.

When I look back on this road trip from one end of New Zealand to the other, I remember how the ocean beyond Cape Reinga whispered to me of the wide world beyond these islands, and also how that gnarled pohutukawa tree at the cape's

tip—enduring and beautiful—spoke even more loudly of all the reasons I'd made this land my home. Recently I heard that Merv passed away. I had met him only that one time but he was larger-than-life, a person I won't forget, and the embodiment of manaakitanga.

Contributing editor **CARRIE MILLER** (@carriemiller_writer) is the author of *100 Dives of a Lifetime*, from *National Geographic Books*.

Travel Wise: New Zealand

WHAT TO KNOW

Traveling during New Zealand's spring and fall allows greater spontaneity. During the summer months (December through February), New Zealanders go on holiday and tourist numbers surge.

Check out Transfercar (transfercar.co.nz) for rental car deals. Road trips are often one way, stranding rental cars at different branches. This service offers tourists great deals (free to minimal charges) for returning rental cars within a set time frame. You'll have the most luck if you're traveling from south to north.

The majority of New Zealand's roads are two lanes and winding. Trying to do more than three hours of driving a day means you'll zoom through all the smaller towns and you'll miss exploring. Don't be tempted to pack in too much.

Pulling over to let faster drivers pass will endear you to locals who have spent many hours stuck behind camper vans on those narrow roads.

WHERE TO STAY

Lands End

At this five-room inn, located at the end of State Highway 1 in Bluff, one of New Zealand's southernmost towns, location is everything. Ocean views fill guestroom windows, and a cozy fire welcomes

travelers back after a short hike up Bluff Lookout or a step back in time at the Bluff Maritime Museum. landsendhotel.co.nz

Whangamomona Hotel

This circa 1912, boarding house-style hotel has character and serves as the community hub of the Republic of Whangamomona, on the North Island. Get your passport stamped before heading up to one of the 16 rooms with shared baths. A wide wooden balcony is the perfect spot to look out on the (lack of) town. whangamomona-hotel.co.nz

Tatahi Lodge Beach Resort

This relaxed lodge on two subtropical acres is a five-minute walk to the white-sand beaches for which the Coromandel Peninsula, on the North Island, is famous. tatahilodge.co.nz

WHERE TO EAT

Oyster Cove Restaurant

Diners at this Bluff restaurant enjoy bay vistas while feasting on oysters on the half shell, Cloudy Bay clams, and dishes such as lamb salad. oystercove.co.nz

The Cray Pot

Sit at shaded outdoor picnic tables while dining on crayfish, other seafood, and burgers at this waterside food shack in tiny Jackson Bay. thecraypotnz.com



GO WITH NAT GEO

National Geographic Expeditions offers several New Zealand trips, including a 12-day "South Island Adventure" with hikes along the country's Great Walks trails, a Milford Sound cruise, and kayaking along the coast of Abel Tasman National Park. natgeoexpeditions.com/explore; 888-966-8687

Land

of



light

Everything is illuminated
in Portugal. Here's how to
bask in the glow of the world's
most radiant destination

BY ANNE FARRAR



**Porto, with its six
bridges spanning
the Douro River and
endless casks of port
wine, dazzles at dusk.**

It's bright.

Achingly bright.

I squint in the sunlight as I drive, winding north from Lisbon in late afternoon. When I take a turnoff from the highway and emerge from a tunnel, I see my destination: Porto, shimmering in the Iberian sun. Awash in faded hues and tiles, Portugal's second largest city is a panorama of blue, yellow, brown, and green. The colors calm me; they soothe my eyes and slow me down. It's October and the breeze is cool.

Out of the car and walking a tangle of streets and alleyways, I follow a melody floating in the air and find a man with his old street organ. He has a fuzzy chicken pecking at seeds on a table, almost as if it's dancing to the music. Behind him, the sun has cast a silhouette, etched in light, of an organ grinder against a wall of buildings. It looks like a Hague School painting. I toss a euro into the man's basket, snap a photo, and keep walking.

But not far. I can barely move a block without pausing to admire a stucco wall disappearing into shadows, the shimmer of a red-tiled rooftop, the brilliant reflection of sun hitting a white sheet of laundry hanging out to dry. For the past year or two, it seemed as if every other person I met said they had just been or were going to Portugal. They'd say Lisbon was lovely, the Alentejo timeless, Porto magical. When I asked why, their words seemed to fail. "Go see for yourself," they'd say.

Now I'm one of them, camera in hand, seeking something elusive—enlightenment that lasts, a way to hold onto the fleeting

Praça Luís de Camões, a plaza named for Portugal's great poet, is a popular gathering spot between the vibrant Lisbon neighborhoods of Chiado and Bairro Alto.



FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI, PREVIOUS PAGES: STBAUS7/GETTY IMAGES



Travelers bathe in sunset rays at Cabo de São Vicente in Sagres, the southwesternmost point in Europe.





moments we have when we travel. The light filters through the streets like a stream through reeds. It plays tricks on where it'll land, splashing about, reflecting in beautiful, faceted angles. Click, the blue-and-white tiles; click, reflections of pastries in a window; click, dust kicked up by workers restoring centuries-old buildings. More scenes: the UNESCO-inscribed Monastery of Serra do Pilar, the Gothic Church of St. Francis, a man in a green fedora. People are gathering on the Dom Luís I Bridge to watch the sunset. At a riverside café, a family chatters and laughs as they nibble Porto's famous salted cod dish, *bacalhau*. Click.

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE: NAZERÉ On the flight over, I sat next to a traveler who shared a not-very-well-kept secret: Nazaré is one of the most attractive beach towns in Portugal, with some of the largest waves in the world. Big-wave season is from October to May, and in November 2017 Brazilian surfer Rodrigo Koxa made history by riding an 80-foot roller, breaking the world record for the highest wave ever surfed.

Such mastery of the seas has a precedent. From the early 15th into the 17th centuries, Portuguese seafarers ruled the waves, launching a European age of discovery. Prince Henry the Navigator urged his captains ever onward in search of a route to India, leading to a vast trading empire that stretched

from Africa and the Arabian Peninsula to South America and the Caribbean. Sailors navigated by the stars and relied on lighthouses to guide them safely away from the rocks.

The Nazaré lighthouse has functioned since 1903, and it's the best overlook in the area, a front row seat on the surfing

action. From the light's perch in a former fort, I see the wide white sands stretching out on either side of the promontory. Next to me, hardy surfers with beers in hand are scanning the water, planning their next waves. There's an autumn chill in the air, but I can imagine these sands teeming in the summertime.

CITY OF REFLECTION: LISBON This city is crisp as a starched shirt. The scent of bread and scrubbed cobblestone lures me down through the capital's passages and narrow streets. An espresso, a convivial greeting, and a *pastel de nata* (an eggy custard tart) start the day. Customers lean on the Leitaria Académica café's glass counter and are attended to by a single, perfectly poised barista, accustomed to this morning choreography.

As I walk the streets, the Castelo de São Jorge looms like a giant, its presence secured in history. Celts, Romans, Moors—all called this place home at one point, each leaving behind a piece of their civilization for future residents to uncover.

What strikes me most is the vitality of the city—ancient and faded, but vibrant. Absorbed by the immensity, I keep missing



CULTURE + MUSEUMS

Portugal, with a population of just over 10 million, is nonetheless crammed with all the baroque gilding that the gold of Brazil afforded. And its once stodgy scattering of museums has grown with an eye toward contemporary and quirky offerings. —John Krich

BATALHA

Monastery of Batalha

A side trip off Portugal's main north-south highway takes you to this little country town, dominated by a spectacular convent and church that took more than 130 years to construct, starting in the 14th century. The convent was designed as a showcase of the Manueline style, Portugal's highly ornamented architecture that incorporated Spanish, northern European, and Moorish influences. The courtyards and stained glass—as well as its UNESCO World Heritage status—are worth the detour.

GUIMARÃES

Historic Center of Guimarães

The "jewel of the north" boasts a lovingly restored old town, an evocative castle tower, and CIAJG (Centro Internacional das Artes José de Guimarães), a recent and stunningly radical transformation of the city's municipal market housing a private collection that juxtaposes contemporary art with folk art. Words on the old city wall reference Guimarães's place in history: *Aqui Nasceu Portugal*—Portugal was born here.

LISBON

Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga

Portugal's main repository of classical painting reveals much of the country's early artistic tastes and guards the extraordinary Hieronymus Bosch triptych "Temptation of St. Anthony." After admiring it, explore one of Lisbon's most beautiful blocks, the Rua das Janelas Verdes (Street of Green Windows), and stroll the charming alleys of the Santos neighborhood.

PORTO

Serralves Museum

In keeping with Porto's role as the main center for industry and design, this sleek minimalist building houses the country's most daring showcase of contemporary international art. Come for the thought-provoking art installations, stay for a walk in the sculpture-dotted, 44-acre park, which includes formal flower gardens, tree groves, and elegant fountains.

LISBON

Museu do Fado

This small museum near the working-class Alfama district, where Portugal's plaintive ballads bemoaning fate—fado—first emerged in the 1800s, presents a vivid portrait of popular culture in Lisbon. Its archives offer a chance to listen to dozens of the greatest singers. The intimate auditorium showcases current vocalists, a low-key alternative to the commercialized fado houses.

Passengers arriving at Porto's São Bento train station are amazed by the 20,000 blue-and-white azulejo tiles, which date from the early 1900s and depict historical scenes and rural landscapes.





FOOD + DRINKS

Portugal's cuisine has long resisted the encroachments of fusion or molecular gastronomy. Hearty to a fault, family-run restaurants churn out satisfying variants of *bacalhau* (salted cod), *piri-piri* chicken, and ultrasweet cakes. But here are some recent attempts to shake up the Portuguese palate. —JK

LISBON

Belcanto/ Bairro do Avillez

Top chef José Avillez's two dining meccas in the Chiado neighborhood share a love of reinvented Portuguese food. Belcanto boasts two Michelin stars and exquisite dishes with names like "The garden of the goose that laid the golden eggs." Bairro do Avillez is a sprawling space housing a casual *taberna* (tavern), market, and cabaret. belcanto.pt, bairrodoavillez.pt

PORTO

O Papparico

Within a rustic and intimate setting, an Alsatian executive chef goes beyond the classic and expected seafood dish *bacalhau* by playing with colors and combinations yet staying loyal to "Portugality," the title of one tasting menu. Befitting one of the world's top capitals of viniculture, the wine cellar seems infinite and the bar is worth lingering over. opaparico.com

LISBON

Peixaria da Esquina

Another of Portugal's cookbook mainstays, Vítor Sobral has opened modestly priced, casual *tascas* in Lisbon and Brazil that hew closer to traditional flavors yet with lightness and flair, such as Azorean tuna with mango, peppers, and pennyroyal. At his all-seafood showcase Peixaria da Esquina, try the squid sautéed with shiitake mushrooms, broad beans, and coriander. peixariadaesquina.com



LISBON

Epur

Opened a year ago, this restaurant is a harbinger of Portuguese cuisine's future. The chef is French, the menu and decor, minimalist. Dishes honor the restaurant's name in their focus on essential local ingredients. From rabbit to tuna to prized "black pork," these dishes don't so much shout as gently hum. Located across the street from the national art school, the dining room also has one of the city's best panoramas. epur.pt

PORTO

Majestic Café

If you tire of experimentation and seek a proper finish to the meal—or if you're famished after an afternoon's amblings—this pastry palace is a classic of the genre, along with Lisbon's Pastelaria Versailles. Approaching their centennials, both are resplendently mirrored examples of a beaux arts heyday. Do as the locals do: Pair an eggy pastry with a strong *bica* (espresso). cafemajestic.com, [facebook.com/pastelariaversailles](https://www.facebook.com/pastelariaversailles)

The Alentejo region of Portugal is known for its cork forests, Roman ruins, and vineyards such as Torre de Palma (above), a design-centric hotel and winery near the town of Monforte.

Porto's Majestic Café (opposite) has been serving up art nouveau glamour, strong coffee, and eggy pastries for almost a hundred years. Try the *rabanadas*, the Majestic's take on French toast, paired with a glass of tawny port.



FESTIVALS + EVENTS

Despite the *pelourinhos* (old stone pillories for transgressors) that are ubiquitous in nearly every small town, Portugal's spirit for celebration always wins out. What else can you say about a country that hosts not only the pavilions for countless pilgrims who come to honor the miracle of Our Lady of Fatima but also the huge soundstages of Lisbon's own crazed version of the Rock in Rio festival? —JK

LISBON

Feast of St. Anthony

Throughout June, the squares and neighborhoods of Lisbon take turns celebrating the city's patron saint, who was apparently quite the seafood maven. The entire city, but especially touristic Alfama, is enveloped in the scent of grilled sardines, traditionally eaten whole, heaped on *broa* (Portuguese corn bread), and washed down with plenty of wine. Drum-pounding parades are also staged.

GOLEGÃ

Horse Fair

In central Portugal, this autumn gathering that coincides with the Feast of St. Martin draws hundreds of regional riders showing off not just their equine mounts but also their formal costumes featuring traditional waistcoats and blazers and matching flat hats. This is one of the best places to get in touch with rural Portugal and to gobble the finest chestnuts. feiradagolega.com

SINES

Festival Músicas do Mundo

The large town of Sines, along the Alentejo coast, is invaded every July (the 18th to the 27th this year) by crowds of enthusiasts eager to hear some of the top world-music performers from all over the planet, amid sea breezes and fireworks. fmmsines.pt

LISBON

Jazz in August

Some of Europe's most erudite practitioners of contemporary jazz perform long into balmy nights at the outdoor amphitheater on the grounds of Lisbon's world-class Gulbenkian Museum. gulbenkian.pt/jazzemagosto

LAKE IDANHA-A-NOVA

Boom

Portugal's version of Nevada's Burning Man, this tented, new-age conclave gathers every other year (next in 2020) on the mountainous shores of Lake Idanha-a-Nova. The festival agenda is filled with trance music, art installations, and alt-culture experiences. boomfestival.org

GO WITH NAT GEO

Nat Geo Expeditions offers several itineraries to Portugal, including an 11-day cruise along the Douro River embarking from Porto. natgeoexpeditions.com/explore; 888-966-8687

Sights and sips (clockwise from left): From its hilltop perch, Castelo de São Jorge provides the best vistas of Lisbon; painted tiles make perfect souvenirs in Porto; enologist Duarte de Deus works on the wine-aging process at Torre de Palma winery in northern Alentejo.







FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI

the details. I'm drifting between the past and present. But then I shake free from my reflection when I see a beguiling church, or watch as college students dunk each other in a fountain, or pause for the changing of the guard in front of the Palácio de Belém. Suddenly I'm back in the moment, looking for the next street to turn down, the next vision to seize.

LIGHTNING ON THE HORIZON: ALENTEJO I roll from hill to hill through the Alentejo region, a landscape soft on the eyes and the senses. Sunlight slices through the cork trees. A white bull, sleeping in a field, seems like a ghostly apparition. Pigs shuffle from one acorn (*bellota*) to another, foraging for the nutty flavor that gives Iberian ham its richness. Castles and churches dot the hilltops; they are relics from the past, yet they retain a power in the present. It's shoulder season, and the streets are empty save for a couple of stocky men, with weathered faces and hands, walking home from the pub.

Olive trees frame the driveway of farm estate São Lourenço do Barrocal, outside Monsaraz. Some, the owners tell me, are more than a thousand years old. Gnarled, yet still dropping olives, one tree grows within a few yards of a Neolithic stone that has stood sentinel for nearly 5,000 years. I imagine the conversations these two monuments have shared over the centuries.

A storm rolls in and the town of Monsaraz appears spectral against the lavender sky. Lightning strikes, and the last rays of the day struggle to penetrate an ominous thunderhead.

THE GOLDEN HOUR: SAGRES I'm tired but the hotel concierge says go. He marks an X on the map and shoves the paper into my hands. You won't be sorry, he says. I drive quickly through the town of Sagres and take the three o'clock exit at the roundabout. Soon the land flattens out, and I see that cars are parked alongside the road. I keep driving until I find a spot to snuggle into. People are walking, laughing and talking excitedly as the wind whips their hair. The crowd's energy surges with anticipation. Something spectacular is about to happen.

I arrive at the end of the road, to the westernmost point in Portugal. Atlantic waves crash against the cliffs of Sagres, seagulls ride the thermals, gliding ever higher. I settle into a gathering of about a hundred people as an orange glow bursts through the clouds. At first, a silence washes over us as we witness the end of the day at the end of the world. Then someone holds up a glass of wine to make a toast. The sky changes from orange to purple to pastel shades of pink and blue. We walk back to our cars slowly as shadows devour the last glimmers of light.

Director of photography ANNE FARRAR's (@afarrar) story on Labrador appeared in our August/September 2018 issue.

Storied stone steps lead to the battlements of Castelo de Monsaraz and sweeping views of the walled city and surrounding Alentejo countryside.

NATURE + OUTDOORS

For some, the urge to explore nature can be satisfied with a trip to Lisbon's Oceanário, one of the world's great aquariums. But Portugal's beckoning sands, thundering surf, and meandering rivers will not be denied. —JK

BEYOND LISBON

Beaches

Solitary beachcombing (and windsurfing) can be found within an hour of the global capital of what was once a great seafaring empire. Guincho, just beyond gentrified Cascais, is the best of them. Difficult to reach by public transport, the Arrábida Peninsula just south of Lisbon is dotted with small beaches and wild, winding heights.

SOUTHWEST PORTUGAL

Vicentina Coast

Along the Atlantic where Alentejo meets the Algarve, a number of long beaches seem to extend forever—Odeceixe and Zambujeira do Mar are the better known—with nearby lagoons attracting some of Europe's spectacular migratory birds. The jagged cliffs of Cabo de São Vicente evoke Ireland and are situated near where the first Portuguese caravels set off into the unknown.

ALENTEJO

Almendres Cromlech

The most extensive and impressive of Iberia's many archaeological finds, the stone monoliths of this circular, mini-Stonehenge were stumbled upon only 50 years ago. Walks and drives along dirt roads through Alentejo's distinctive cork forests (with gnarled black trunks numbered and stripped every nine years) supplement the site's abiding mystery.

CENTRAL PORTUGAL

Serra da Estrela

The "Star Mountain Range" is the only place in Portugal where it regularly snows. Skiing is possible, but better yet are the hikes along its 60-mile-long stretch of rolling ridges. This isn't exactly heavy-duty mountaineering, but a chance to stroll in lofty mists alongside shepherds and their flocks.

NORTH OF THE DOURO VALLEY

Pedras Salgadas Spa and Nature Park

At this old-timey sanitarium and bottling plant for the country's most popular sparkling water, the sleepy thermal spa has been given new life by way of modernist cabins and tree houses, created by avant-garde architects, for vacation rentals. pedrassalgadaspark.com

Days in the sun (clockwise from top): In the Algarve, beachgoers descend from the top of the cliffs to the golden sands of Lagos, and a canine beachcomber lounges on white-sand Monte Gordo; São Lourenço do Barrocal is a farm turned hotel in the Alentejo.





KINGAWO/ALAMY (ROCKS), ANNE FARRAR (DOG, HOTEL); NG MAPS, MAP DATA: © OPENSTREETMAP CONTRIBUTORS, AVAILABLE UNDER OPEN DATABASE LICENSE: OPENSTREETMAP.ORG/COPYRIGHT



STAY

Rooms in Portugal come with a view, as well as considerable historic and architectural heft. While state-run *pousadas* (inns), housed in old palaces or convents, remain a unique experience, many newer lodges outdo them with cutting-edge spas and the chance to partake in agro-tourism. —JK

ALGARVE

Martinhal Sagres Beach Family Resort

This upscale resort caters to multigenerational travelers. Adults can sip cocktails as kids learn how to surf. A concierge provides strollers, high chairs, or bottle sterilizers. martinhal.com/sagres

LISBON

Verride Palácio Santa Catarina

This recently renovated mansion with 19 rooms has one of the best vantage points in all of Lisbon, perched above the

steep cobblestoned alleys of the Bica neighborhood. verridesc.pt

DOURO VALLEY

Quinta Do Vallado Wine Hotel

For the quintessence of Portugal's wine country, this 13-room wine-estate hotel makes for the perfect frame to view the magnificent Douro Valley. Guests sleep in either the manor house dating from 1733 or a new wing completed in 2012, both options set amid the sloping terraces of ripening vines. quintadovallado.com

ALENTEJO

São Lourenço do Barrocal

Surprisingly, it's in the countryside that many of Portugal's most daring architects have worked their minimalist magic. A humble working farm near Monsaraz transformed by Eduardo Souto de Moura, the São Lourenço do Barrocal pampers with spare simplicity. barrocal.pt

By **Robert Earle Howells**

PRAIRIE HOME

DISCOVER A CLASSIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPE IN NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA



AN UNBROKEN LANDSCAPE OF GRASSES AND WILDFLOWERS STRETCHES AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, PUNCTUATED ONLY BY A COLLECTION OF DOTS ON A DISTANT HILL.



It's a herd of bison, my binoculars reveal. What I can't see, as I scan for miles, is anything human-made.

Before there were amber waves of grain, there were tallgrass prairies. At least 142 million acres of grass covered the territory from Ohio to Kansas, southern Texas to Canada—nearly a third of what became the United States. Today, almost all of it is gone, which is why this sight, on the Nature Conservancy's Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in northeastern Oklahoma, is such a treasure. Most of the grasslands that greeted westward-hoing pioneers gave way to corn and wheat and development. But here a nearly pristine remnant remains, thanks to a convergence of circumstances that resulted in the initial ownership of 39,650 acres of protected prairie.

This vista is imprinted in my memory as one of the most profoundly moving in the country, and I'm thrilled to see it again. When I first visited three decades ago, there was no preserve, only the dream of one. Local ranch owners were willing to sell 100,000 acres of prime land, and the National Park Service

was interested. A deal was never finalized, but in 1989, the Nature Conservancy engineered an audacious \$15 million capital campaign to purchase the 29,000-acre Barnard Ranch and establish the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Conservation and restoration were well under way when I returned in the mid-1990s. Today, thanks to additional purchases over the years, some 51,000 acres are protected.

One thing that hasn't changed since my first visit: Harvey Payne, a rancher-attorney-environmentalist,

Prairie Portraits

In an ongoing project, Osage photographer Ryan RedCorn presents the Osage in ways that are vital and contemporary. Osage elder Herman Mongrain Lookout (left), 78, recalls stories his grandmother told of walking across the prairie when the Osage were removed from Kansas to Oklahoma in 1872. "The prairie is a remnant of what used to be," Lookout says.

RYAN REDCORN (PORTRAIT), HARVEY PAYNE (PRAIRIE); PREVIOUS PAGES: MORGAN HEIM (BISON)



**The Nature Conservancy
manages the 51,000-
acre Joseph H. Williams
Tallgrass Prairie Preserve,
where wildflowers
flourish and bison
(opening photo) roam.**



remains one of the most dedicated advocates for the prairie, and I'm grateful to have him again as my guide, all these years after our first walks on the edge of the unpreserved preserve. After Payne spent years calling for a prairie preserve, he became its manager for 18 years. He's retired from that duty now, but retains the title of community relations coordinator, and is happy to show me around and bring me up to date.

Payne and I meet in downtown Pawhuska, population about 3,500, the preserve's gateway town—and one aspect of the prairie experience that has changed dramatically since my first visit. Cooking-show celebrity Ree “The Pioneer Woman” Drummond has opened The Pioneer Woman Mercantile in one of Pawhuska's historic brick buildings, and the once sleepy town now regularly sees lines of fans stretching around the block, eager to chow down in her eatery or shop for kitchen implements and tchotchkes. A ripple effect has brought new galleries, boutiques, restaurants, and lodgings to downtown Pawhuska. For many visitors, the prairie preserve is serendipity rather than the reason to visit this corner of the state.

Pawhuska is also the seat of the Osage Nation, and the Osage's story is deeply imprinted on these hills. The Osage, pressured by white homesteaders to sell their property in southeastern Kansas in 1870, purchased the hilly Oklahoma land for 70 cents an acre and relocated to the prairie. Karma kicked in when Osage County's first oil wells began producing, circa 1900. Osage headrights—title to the land's gas and minerals—made the Osage almost instantly among the wealthiest people in the world.

As we drive north from town toward the preserve, I ask Payne to refresh my memory as to how a former cattle ranch can qualify as pristine prairie. “Well, first,” Payne says, “we can't call it pristine. As a functioning ecosystem, the tallgrass prairie as it existed historically is effectively extinct. But this is the best semblance of the original that we have.” The prairie's nearly natural state is due to a quirk of geology: The region is relentlessly rocky. The grassy hills are undergirded by so much limestone and sandstone that it's difficult to walk on the prairie, let alone plow it. John Deere's finest steel could never bust this sod.

So the Osage Hills became cattle country. Cattle's impact on the land is far less than that of agriculture—especially when ranchers are careful land managers, as the preserve's former owners were.

Still, cattle are aliens here. The prairie's native ruminants were elk and bison. After the elk were killed off around 1830 and the bison by 1851, ranching and cattle took over. “It's a far cry from a cow pasture to a prairie preserve,” Payne says. We

only need look out the window to see that. The ranchland along the road to the preserve is lovely rolling pasture. But when we enter the preserve, the hills become a multifaceted work of art. “A tallgrass prairie is much more than grass,” Payne explains. “We've identified more than 750 species of flora on the preserve. Of those, 115 are grasses. The rest are broadleaves and sedges. The cattle will eat some species of grass so much that the broadleaves they don't like take over. Then some ranchers will engage in aerial spraying to kill these broadleaf plants. Then away go the greater prairie chickens and ground-nesting birds...”

Payne's voice trails off. Greater prairie chickens are one of the avian superstars here. Their mating dances are legendary and something that Payne, an avid photographer, has documented for years. His main point is that a true prairie is varied and abundant. My days on the prairie were to become a constant discovery and rediscovery of that fact.

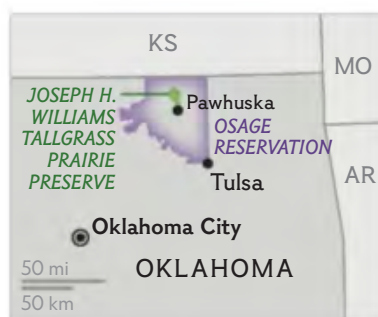
AS WE CONTINUE INTO THE PRESERVE, it is obvious just how abundant a tallgrass prairie is. It's early September, when warm-season grasses are at their tallest, but we're not just

talking about horizon-to-horizon big bluestem, which reaches up to 10 feet this time of year. We also see shorter Indian grass, with its feathery seed heads, and little bluestem, and some truly astounding displays of wildflowers. We pull to the edge of the road beside acres of Leavenworth's eryngo—one- to three-foot stalks with splashy purple thistlelike flowers—and a herd of bison indifferently munching around the fringe of the field. A lone giant post oak puts a strong stamp on the scene, and meadowlarks flit all around.

Bison tend to be scene-stealers wherever they choose to graze, and that's only right. They're irresistible to watch. Signs warn to keep one's distance from the massive wild beasts, but I'll admit to cheating a bit. Not that I'm posing for selfies with them, but I just like to stand nearby, watch, and anthropomorphize—this one's grumpy, this one's looking for affection, how cute is that calf, that guy... he's *huge*.

When I visited 20-some years ago, the preserve had around 300 bison. Today, some 2,700 of them are scattered in groups like this, freely grazing 25,000 acres in the preserve. A nearly 10-mile circular driving route in the western part of the preserve, the Bison Loop, passes through prime bison pasture. There's never a guarantee that bison will appear near the road, but I see them every time I drive through.

Bison—and cattle—stimulate growth on the prairie by grazing the land, but Payne tells me that would be for naught without fire. In a method known as patch burning, preserve managers



Little town on the prairie (clockwise from top): Pawhuska (pop. 3,500) has seen a revival and tourist boom, thanks to the popularity of cooking-show celebrity Ree “The Pioneer Woman” Drummond. The Pioneer Woman Mercantile, in a renovated historic brick building on Main Street, houses a store selling kitchenware and cookbooks, and a restaurant serving comfort fare such as a meatloaf sandwich topped with fried onions.



A Place to Run Free

Truman Pipestem, 17, is headed to Yale University in the fall. A member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Pipestem is also Osage, Otoe-Missouria, and Citizen Potawatomi. He plans to become a lawyer specializing in federal and tribal law. "The prairie reminds me of a child's heaven, letting the wind blow your hair and playing tag all day long."



torch about a third of the acreage every spring, late summer, and fall, mimicking ancient seasons of fire and nature's way of rejuvenating nutritious new growth.

The hirsute beast I described as huge lumbers closer. At nine years old, he's a bit of an outlier, Payne tells me. Most bull bison are rounded up and sold at age six, keeping the total herd size constant and healthy. But a few escape that fate. We continue to watch, mesmerized, for a while. Then Payne remarks: "When the tail comes up like that, it means either charge or discharge." We don't wait to find out which.

AFTER OUR DAYLONG REUNION TOUR of the preserve, Payne leaves me some sage advice for the next few days: "Appreciating the prairie requires a nuanced perspective. Get out there for

Prairie is the preferred habitat for the American golden plover. Says Truman Pipestem, "Just seeing America in its most simple form possible—with green grass and rolling hills—is a sight to behold."

first light and last light. And stop. Stop a lot. Most people just drive through in the middle of the day and miss the experience."

The prairie preserve isn't like a national park, laced with hiking trails and scenic viewpoints overlooking major landmarks. It has a pair of hiking trails that form a 2.5-mile figure-eight loop, and scattered turnouts beside 20 miles of graded gravel roads. It's possible to drive through, tour the visitor center, and drive back to Pawhuska in a couple of hours. But I spend most of the next three days heeding Payne's advice. Up early. Out late. Stop constantly.

The Most Beautiful Sunsets

Olivia Ramirez, 22, is a full-time nanny in Tulsa. "Oklahoma sunsets are so beautiful, but on the prairie they are so much more beautiful. The way the sun hits the grass, even the best picture cannot capture it," she says. "Our creation story says Osage are the stewards of the land and that we show other people how to live with the land."



First light is amazing, not for any particular dazzle on the horizon, but for the soothing calm and quiet. When I cut my engine, I hear, at times, absolutely nothing. Then maybe a few early birds. Amazingly, given that this is flyover country, I never once hear an airplane above. Sometimes I hear bison grunting, coyotes howling, wild turkeys rummaging.

Last light is a living elegy. The prairie feels like a long-gone relative come to life, and in the fading light, a strong sense of nostalgia comes over me. There was a time when this quality of peace, this quiet abundance, was the norm. Now it's a glaring

exception. It's easy to feel sad for what we've lost. But then maybe a white-tailed deer bounds through a field of Maximilian sunflowers, or a Swainson's hawk soars by. I feel settled. And grateful to have this opportunity. It is, after all, why I've come back here.

Between prairie excursions, I poke around Pawhuska. The Osage Nation Museum has a fascinating exhibit of traditional wedding outfits. Across town, in the Osage County Historical Society Museum, one exhibit informs me that from 1904 to 1924, more wealth (from oil) was produced from the Osage Hills than from all the American gold rushes combined. In the

On the preserve, it's still possible to experience the kind of unimpeded views that greeted the pioneers—rolling grassland that stretches to a sunset horizon.





Where Ancestors Walked

Darian Lookout, 23, is Herman Mongrain Lookout's granddaughter. She works for the Osage Nation's financial assistance department and makes traditional Osage clothing, weaving, and beadwork on the side. "My ancestors walked this land. I want to make my ancestors proud and I want to be a good example of Osage and Native American youth."



decade between its first discovery well and its statehood in 1907, Oklahoma became the world's largest oil-producing body. Pawhuska was once the site of the first Rolls-Royce dealership west of the Mississippi.

I stop in at the Osage Nation headquarters to meet Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear. He tells me about the Osage's recent purchase, from Ted Turner, of the 43,000-acre Bluestem Ranch, a cattle spread west of town that will be wholly owned and operated by the Osage.

"Land is critical to our effort to rebuild our nation," Standing Bear says. "We've halted the loss of our land. Now it's up to future generations to do what they can with it." Though he envisions an eventual bison preserve, this will be a working cattle ranch and not open to the public.

Controlled burning helps the prairie rejuvenate, creating a mosaic of diversity—patches of tender new shoots (which bison love), patches thick with accumulated thatch, patches with multiple plant species.

HARVEY PAYNE REJOINS ME for my final day on the prairie. We're headed for the hiking loop, but first detour to pay homage to John Joseph Mathews, the Osage writer who's been called the "Thoreau of the Plains." His 1945 Waldenesque book, *Talking to the Moon*, recounts a decade spent living in a tiny sandstone cabin on a patch of prairie surrounded by blackjack oaks. The Nature Conservancy acquired the Mathews property a few years ago and offers guided tours of the cabin. The place is suitably simple and supremely tranquil. Inside, its most striking feature is a huge stone fireplace, which, Payne promises me, is "the only



one in Osage County with a Latin inscription painted onto the front of the mantel.” It reads *Venari Lavari Ludere Ridere Occast Vivere*—to hunt, to bathe, to play, to laugh; that is, to live. A photo on the mantel shows Mathews, pipe in hand, sitting beside the fireplace, looking, well, utterly at home. The writer, who died in 1979 at the age of 85, is buried just outside, his grave marked by a modest stone.

We’ve saved the hiking loop for last. The trail starts in a remarkable stand of big bluestem, at least eight feet tall. The way is marked by a mown strip—we’re walking entirely on cropped grass—then circles through deep woods beside Sand Creek.

I’m not a particularly knowledgeable birder, but I’m an appreciative one, and there’s a lot going on. Amid a chattering

of red-bellied woodpeckers is a lovely song by a Carolina wren coming from the oak canopy. On the longer portion of the figure eight, Prairie Earth Trail, we cross Sand Creek to behold a sight straight out of a Gary Larson cartoon—seven vultures perched on an old corral rail, and six more on a dead tree trunk. Then suddenly a great horned owl swoops right in front of us, aiming for the creek, and four of the vultures follow suit. Must be something tasty down there.

As we leave the creek and woods and ascend a hillside, we reach a different world. Trees small, grasses tall—a sure sign of fire-managed terrain. We sit for a while on a bench, and Payne recalls a Yogi Berra saying: “You can observe a lot just by watching.” Some of the big bluestem, silhouetted against a gauzy sky,

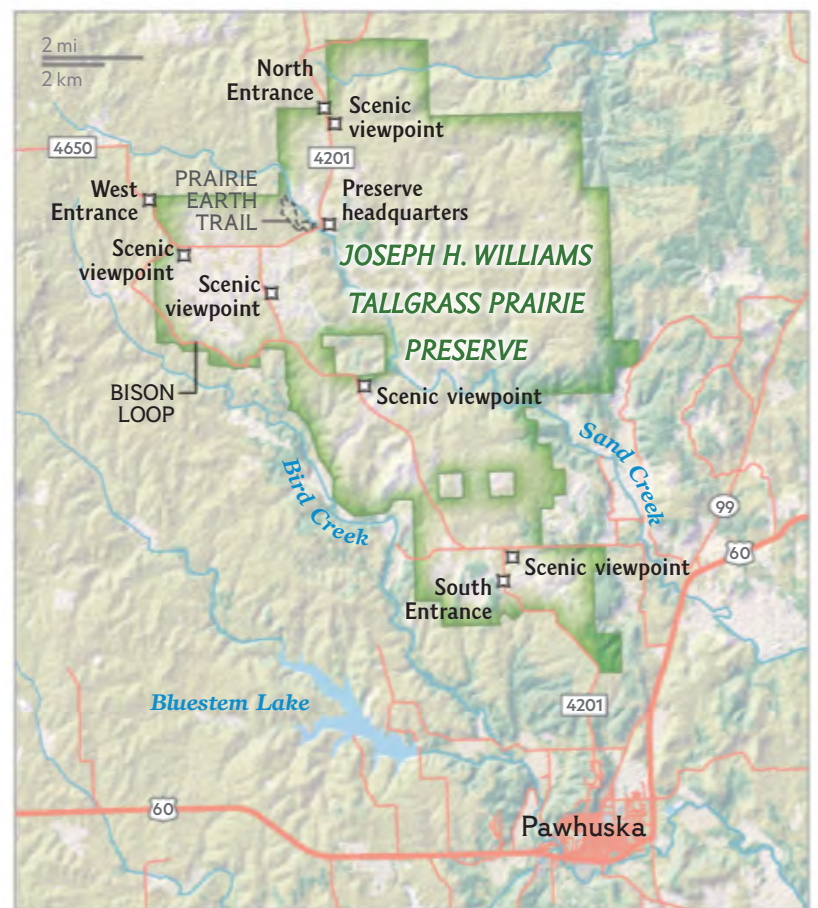


Spring brings the arrival of bison calves, a new generation to call the prairie home.

are fully 10 feet tall. Payne notices my gawking and adds a slightly mind-blowing tidbit: The root systems of prairie grasses extend the same distance as or more than the height of the plant.

I think about that as we reach the apex of the trail, and the views over the hills to the west seem to extend forever. The sky appears infinite. The tallest grasses in the world wave in the breeze, yet half their growth is underground. Life runs deep on the prairie.

ROBERT EARLE HOWELLS (🐦 @bobhowells) is a California-based writer whose passion is public lands that preserve disappearing landscapes. See more of Ryan RedCorn's portraits on Instagram (📷 @redcorn).



Travel Wise: Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

WHEN TO GO

The Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve is operated by the Nature Conservancy and is open year-round. Best times to visit are spring through fall. The grasses are at their tallest in fall, but more likely to be green in spring and early summer. nature.org

WHERE TO STAY

Pioneer Woman Boarding House
Ree Drummond's cowboy-chic hotel has eight individually designed rooms adjacent to her famous Mercantile in downtown Pawhuska. pwboardinghouse.com

Frontier Hotel

This new hotel occupies the meticulously renovated Triangle Building, across the street from the Mercantile. Most rooms have a kitchenette. frontierhotelpawhuska.com

Million Dollar Inn

This Osage-owned, four-suite inn is across the street from the Osage Nation Museum. Each room has a kitchenette and private bath. milliondollarinn.com

WHERE TO EAT

Pioneer Woman Mercantile
Ree Drummond's popular restaurant serves massive portions of country-style cuisine in an airy downstairs space. An upstairs bakery serves pastries and grab-and-go items. themergantile.com

Grill 125

This local favorite serves excellent burgers, steaks, and pies on Pawhuska's Main Street. (918) 287-3444

Bad Brad's Bar-B-Q

The casual roadhouse on the western edge of Pawhuska is where to get your smoked meats. badbrads.com

WHAT TO READ

Visions of the Tallgrass, by James P. Ronda, is a new coffee-table book about the natural history of the prairie. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is David Grann's deeply researched account of the murders of Osage people in the 1920s that became the FBI's first big case. *John Joseph Mathews: Life of an Osage Writer* is a new biography by Michael Snyder.

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We can take you to the mystical citadel of Machu Picchu, hiking through an ancient glacial valley in New Zealand or kayaking amongst the sea turtles in the Galapagos. And others can take you there too, you can even take yourself—but with us you'll realize that travel is about more than just seeing, it's about the life-changing experiences.

If you're ready to really explore, get in touch with one of our travel gurus today, we can journey through New Zealand, South America, Nepal or Europe together. Led by our local guides, we'll show you the world from a new perspective, whether that be from your own two feet, beyond the paddle of your kayak or from the seat of your bike.

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WORLD WISE TRAVEL QUIZ



**Mountaineers
Tenzing Norgay
(right) and Edmund
Hillary (left) pre-
pare to summit
Mount Everest on
May 29, 1953.**

1 Sagarmatha, which means “forehead in the sky,” is the local name of Mount Everest in what language?

2 On which Caribbean island might you sip a mojito—a potent blend of rum, lime juice, mint leaves, and soda water—during a night of rumba dancing?

3 What European airport features a library, oxygen bar, and paintings from the Rijksmuseum collection?

4 A three-day event of music and peace, this iconic festival in the Catskills celebrates its 50th anniversary this year in August. Name it.

5 Ouagadougou is the capital of what small, landlocked West African nation?

6 What Turkish city produced the hand-painted tiles that give Istanbul's Blue Mosque its color?

7 Kulintang music ensembles are a tradition on Mindanao in what Asian island country?

8 In October 2008, asteroid fragments from a protoplanet containing diamonds scattered across the Nubian Desert in which African country?

9 In 1969, the U.S. put the first man on the moon. Which nation was the first to land a spacecraft on it?

10 Catatumbo lightning, an atmospheric phenomenon, occurs in which South American nation?

11 This near-extinct animal was reintroduced to Oklahoma's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in 1993. Name it. (Hint: Read our feature “Prairie Home,” page 88.)



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